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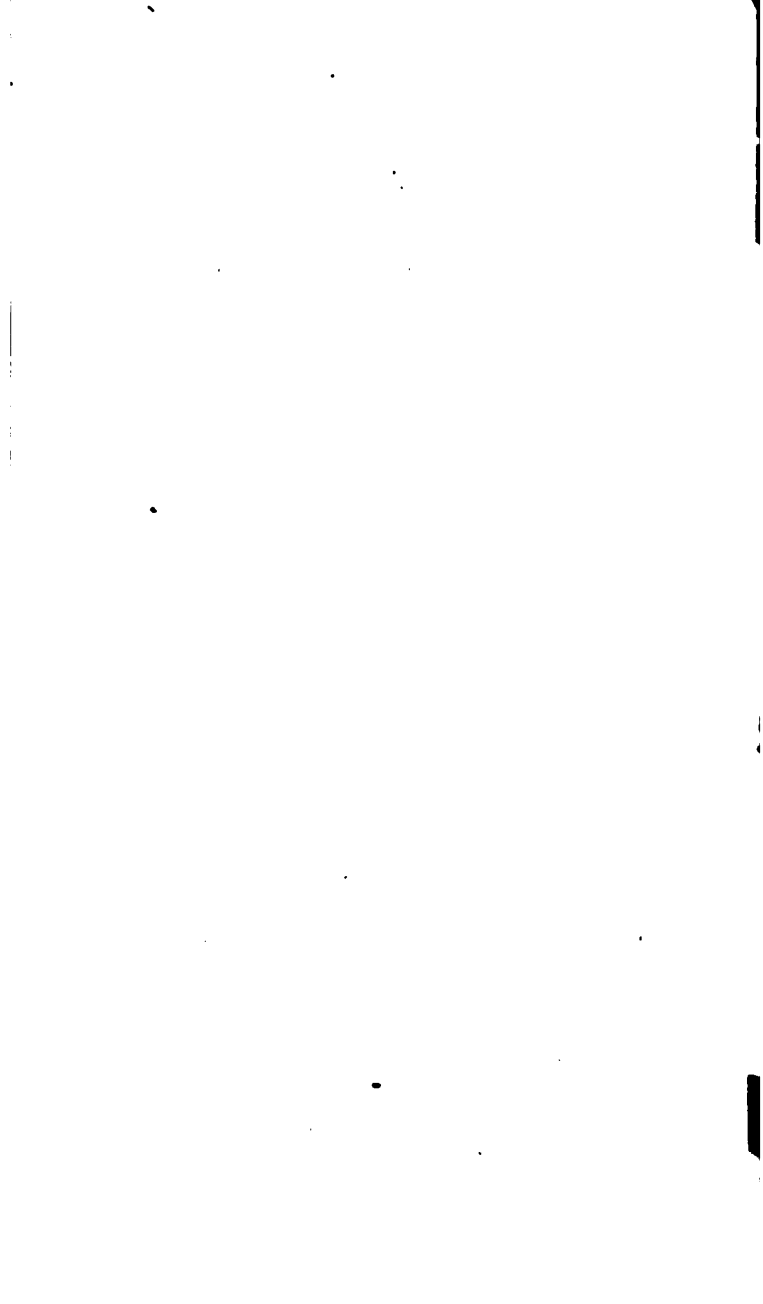




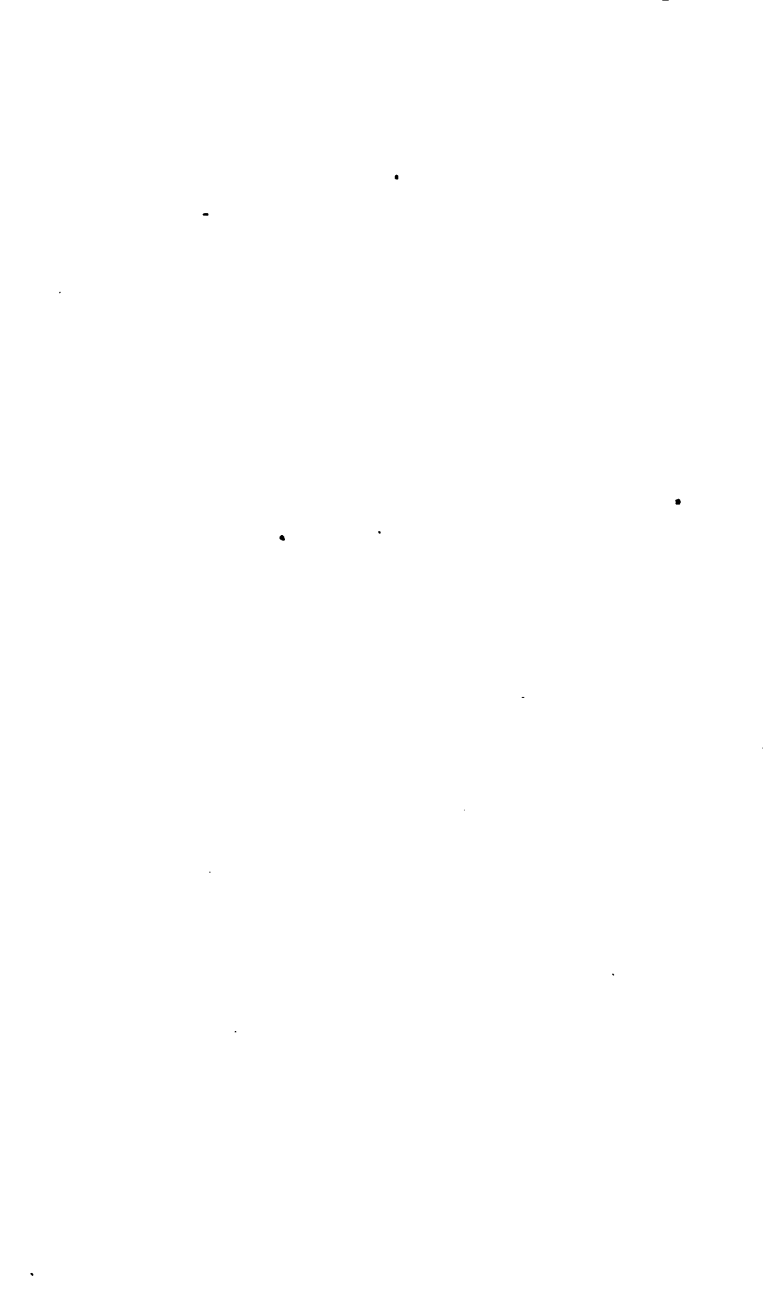
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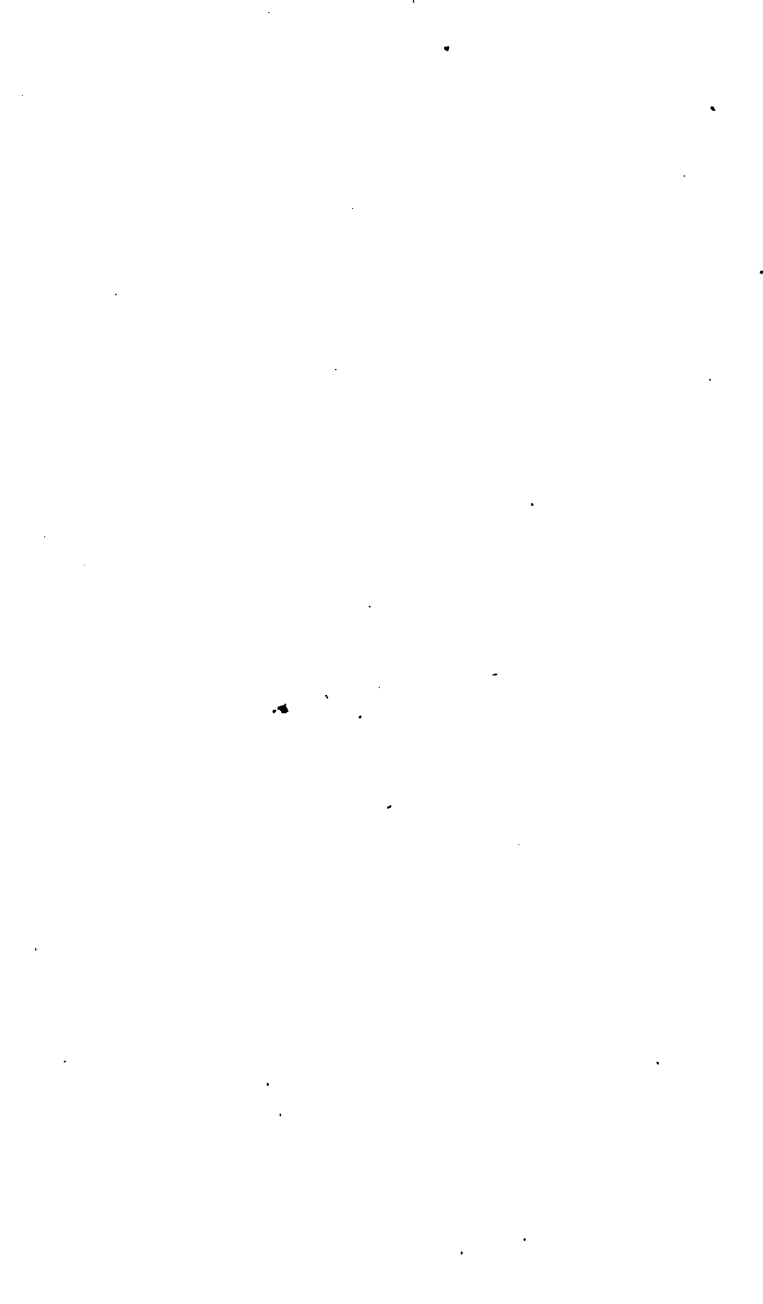
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OLD STORIES.

BY

MISS SPENCE,

AUTHOR OF "A TRAVELLER'S TALE,"

&c. &c.

———— Many a tale
Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
And many a legend peopling the dark woods.
Wordsworth.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1832.

LONDON:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

TO
MRS. MYDDELTON BIDDULPH,
THE PRESENT POSSESSOR OF
CHIRK CASTLE,
THE FOLLOWING VOLUMES
ARE
(WITH PERMISSION)
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY HER OBEDIENT
AND OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.



ADVERTISEMENT.

During an excursion into Shropshire and North Wales, in the summer of 1820, the extraordinary natural curiosity of Kynaston's Cave was pointed out to me, as one of those singular and wild spots which is visited by every traveller who goes in quest of romantic scenery and legendary lore, with which not only North Wales, but every part of Shropshire abounds. The tradition which belongs to this Cave suggested the idea

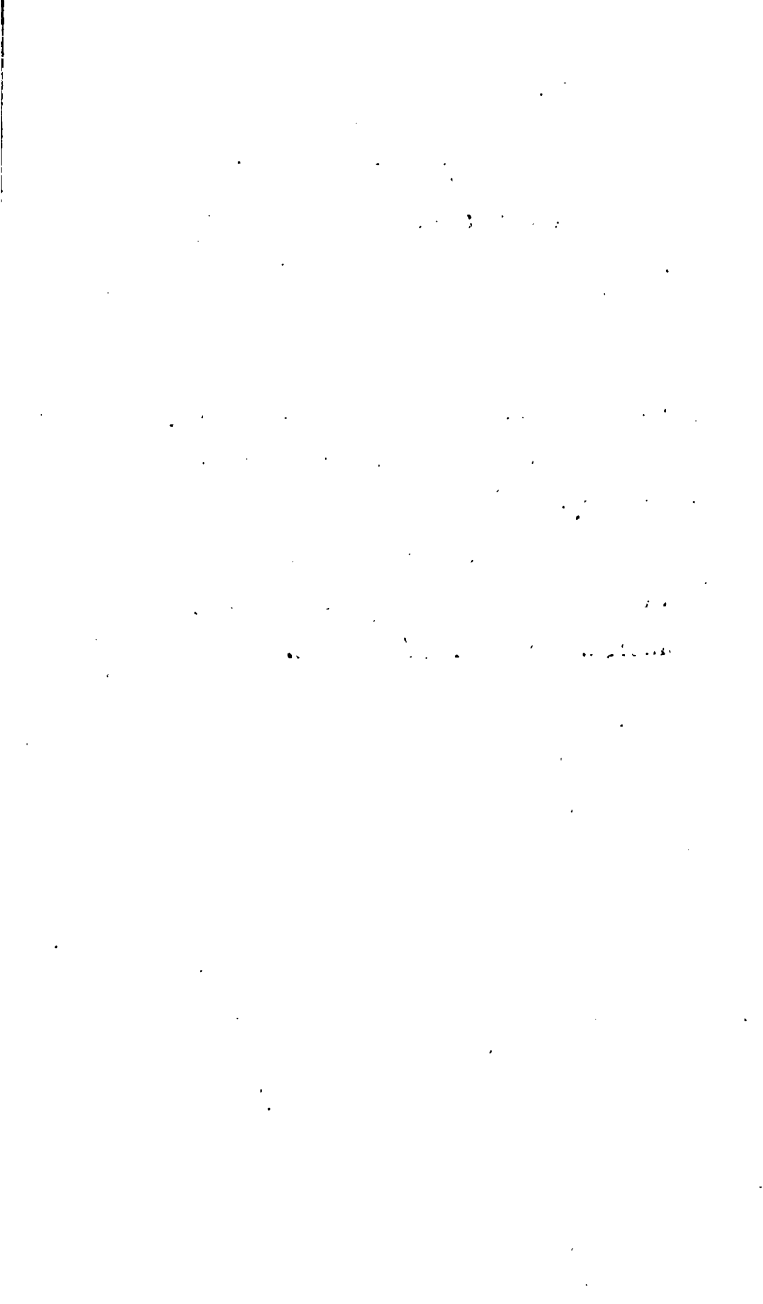
of forming a tale on the subject ; but the remote period in which the events occurred that marked the life of Sir Humphry Kynaston, the author hopes will plead her excuse for an imperfect sketch formed on the slender materials obligingly supplied by Mr. Dovaston of West Felton, finding it impossible to trace from any authority the characters and names of Sir Humphry's associates.

Amongst the very few perfect baronial Castles now remaining is that of Chirk. This magnificent and venerable structure, Mrs. Myddelton Biddulph, with the true and noble spirit of national patriotism, has so restored to its ancient splendour, before falling into decay, that Chirk Castle for centuries to come will proudly raise its lofty towers above the luxuriant woods, which shelter its pon-

derous walls, a monument of the munificence of its present owner.

The *Old Story*, designated *The Knight's Daughter*, will carry the reader back to that remote age when Gwayn, now Chirk Castle, was in the early possession of Sir Roger Mortimer.

The author intends adding from Scotland's border, at a future period, two more volumes of *Old Stories*.



TALE THE FIRST.

INTRODUCTION.

MY MOTHER was a native of North Wales, and had spent all her juvenile years amidst its most sublime scenes. She felt a peculiar delight in reverting to that period of her life. Like all persons who have long been accustomed to dwell in mountainous countries, she retained even in her latter days, a romantic spirit of enthusiasm which age could not chill, though its snows were scattered on her head. Her eyes again illuminated with vivacity, when she described, at our evening fire-side, the valiant deeds, primitive customs, and superstitions of the nation to which she belonged. She had much.

of the poetry by heart, which she sang or recited, with patriotic fondness. The only subject on which we were disposed to cavil was, a proud assumption of family consequence, that often led her into wearisome details of the fallen grandeur of her ancestors; whose genealogy, I verily believe, she could trace from the flood. This weakness I considered unpardonable in a person possessed of an excellent understanding, and who always maintained a dignity of character which alone belongs to a reflective and exalted mind.

Myself, born in the heart of the city of London, and brought up by my father, in one of the first banking houses, I inherited no national partialities, though, I confess; there were times when I felt a desire to visit Wales, that I might judge whether my mother's descriptions were not greatly exaggerated, from that *amour du pays*, which the Welsh, the Scotch, the Swiss, carry with them to the grave, and which few Englishmen can justly

comprehend. It is the English alone, who are cold, shy, reserved to strangers. Even when chance throws them together in a foreign land, they are equally strangers, whilst almost every other nation greet one another with warm cordiality, springing from a sort of spontaneous affection, inherited as a birthright.

Many were the extraordinary legends my mother used to relate. The marvellous always predominated; and though I paid all due attention to her narrative, credulity was often put to the test; and I could not help fancying the garrulity of old age outstept probability.

One legend, in particular, proved such a favourite theme, and she so solemnly attested its authenticity, I resolved, whenever I could be spared from the banking house, to make an excursion as far as my mother's native village, situated within a mile of the ancient castle which she described as having some centuries

ago been the scene of her wonderful and romantic tale.*

Towards the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, when the bright sun of its glory had illuminated the genius of her poets and statesmen, and shone on the victories of her Marlborough, like the same day star on the field of Gilgal—when it was drawing towards its setting, to rise again after the revolution of an hundred years,

* Not far from Denbigh is the mansion of Gwaenyong. Amongst the family papers was found the following anecdote:—

David Myddelton, who was styled receiver of Denbigh, in the 19th of Edward IV., in the second of Richard III., made his addresses to Elyn, daughter of Sir J. Done, of Cheshire, and gained the lady's affections, but the parents preferred John Done of Corton. The marriage was accordingly celebrated; which David having notice of, watched the bridegroom leading the bride out of church, killed him on the spot, carried away his mistress, and married her the same day.

From Roger, the son of this match, descended the Myddeltons of this place (*Chirk castle*).—*Pennant's North Wales*.

to form as bright a radiance round the names of British poets, British statesmen, and British Wellington—at the close of the seventeenth century, it was my misfortune to be deprived of my venerable mother. For thirty years she had cherished me with unceasing tenderness. Her life had been blameless and happy ; her death was that of a peaceful slumber, which passed her into eternity. The shock I sustained by this event was electric. She had retired to rest in her usual health, and awoke no more to the cares and anxieties of this mortal world. We had lived in the happiest companionship together. I revered, I loved my mother ; no pursuit of my life was unknown to her ; and in her I lost not only a parent and friend, but a cheerful and amusing companion.

I had scarcely attained the age of one and twenty when my father died. At his demise, according to his will, I was nominated his successor, and entered on the

firm of one of the richest banking houses in the city. From boyhood I had lived in his counting house ; I understood business, and liked it. By close application and industry I had the pleasure, under the inspection of a very able man, to see our house continue to flourish, and become one of the most prosperous.

When the occupation of the day ended, and I retired to our former cheerful parlour, and beheld the arm-chair no longer filled by the venerable figure of my mother, there was such a mournful stillness in all around me, my spirits could not recover the shock which they had sustained, my nerves were unstrung, and I resolved to change the scene during one of the autumnal months, and inhale the invigorating mountain breeze of North Wales.

The period then was arrived, when I was to visit the scenes of my mother's juvenile days—scenes she had a thousand times dwelt on with tender recollection,

and painted in all the glowing colours of
of one, who loved

“The mountain, and the flood.”

To a man who has lived all his days within the smoky atmosphere of London, and never gone twenty miles beyond its dusky region, it is not easy to describe the sensation which is experienced by the extraordinary transition, nor the effect rural objects have on the senses of that man, if he be possessed of any taste for the beautiful and enlivening objects of nature.

Just before evening had obscured with its shadowy veil the soft features of the pastoral landscape, and the setting sun touched with golden tints the lofty summits of the Berwyn mountains, I found myself, on the fourth day of my journey, within a few miles of the village of my maternal ancestors. Nothing in nature could be more sublime and lovely than the scene before me ; a brilliant river, rapid and pellucid, flowed through a sylvan val-

ley, where every flowery mead was enlivened with cattle. The road wound between precipitous hills; a rustic bridge of one arch thrown over the brawling Ceiriog, conducted me to the foot of another eminence, on the brow of which rose the broad grey tower of the village church, with a few houses clustering round it, in rustic beauty. The inn stood at the termination of a short street of the most ordinary appearance. From the very romantic spot on which the village stood, on a near approach, expectation was disappointed. Gwayn * possessed not that neatness and rural adornment which exclusively belongs to England, proclaiming, if not opulence, those frugal social comforts not to be found in any other parts of the united kingdom.

* Chirk, formerly denominated Gwayn, is almost wholly a hilly country, having on it two very conspicuous mountains, Cader Ferwyn and the y-Syllattyn. The river Ceiriog, with its accompanying valley, divides the upper part in a diagonal line.—*Beauties of England and Wales.*

A large old fashioned brick mansion, bearing the arms of the noble family of Gwayn castle, promised good accommodation for travellers.

I was shewn into a spacious parlour, badly furnished, and affording little comfort to the occupier. I threw open the lattice window, which shut out the prospect, and thence commanded a view of an extensive wood, crowning with leafy luxuriance a vast range of hills, and reaching in thick embowering shade to the pastoral vallies.

An unusual bustle seemed to be at the Inn. The host and hostess were continually hastening to and fro, to supply with ale a throng of people who were collected round the door.

After regaling myself with a jug, whilst the supper I ordered was preparing, I directed my steps towards the churchyard, which had attracted my notice in passing, from the number of funereal yew-

trees that shaded this sacred repository of the dead.

On entering the church-yard, I found the air impregnated with the most balmy fragrance. On every grassy hillock was planted, "full many a simple flower," where,

"Tansy and pink with languid beauty smile,
The primrose opening at the twilight hour,
And velvet tufts of fragrant camomile."

MASON.

A blackbird was pouring forth in rich melody its evening song from a neighbouring tree, which hung its pensile branches over an adjoining meadow, separated by a stile from the church-yard.

I pensively rested on the step; for there was a sober serenity in every object to awaken contemplation; but it was contemplation, even in this scene of death, which rather soothed than depressed the spirits.

Soon I was startled from my reverie by the deep solemn tone of the church bell, again and again repeated, in that pausing regularity, which announces a funeral. It was not curiosity that now transfixed me to the spot, but a feeling impossible to define, as I beheld winding up the hill a mournful procession consisting only of females, whose pensive figures, simply robed in white garments, told the piteous tale, that it was a virgin sister they were consigning to an early grave.*

From the eminence where I stood, I could discern every movement of the solemn ceremony, which was attended by a multitude of men, women, and children; for the whole neighbourhood appeared to be assembled on the mourn-

* In case the author may be accused of plagiarism, she begs leave to say, the following description of a village funeral was written more than a twelve-month before the publication of *The Sketch Book*—a work, which, for simple elegance and beauty, stands unrivalled, since the appearance of Mr. Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling*.

ful occasion ; not from idle curiosity, but inspired by sentiments of genuine and universal lamentation.

I fancied that distinct strains of solemn psalmody proceeded from voices of tuneful melody, swelling and dying away as the choral notes mingled with the passing breeze : nor was I mistaken ; for, as the procession reached the church, the anthem rose in so loud and pious a strain, that notwithstanding the language was unknown to me, the melody was so plaintive and affecting I found the tears flowing to my eyes.

I joined the procession on its entering the great door.

Before the awful service commenced the bier was laid down, and the whole group of mourners fell prostrate around it ; and with bended knees, and clasped hand, with pious humiliation, repeated the Lord's prayer.* One female, whose

* At every crossway, between the house and the church, they laid down the bier, knelt, and repeated

face was completely shaded by the hood she wore (though the graceful dignity of her deportment nothing could conceal) was so deeply affected, it was only inarticulately, and interrupted by audible sobs, she gave utterance to the pious act in which she was engaged, and which absorbed her whole soul.

the Lord's prayer, and did the same when they first entered the church. After the corpse is brought into the church, and the lesson has been read, it is then customary to sing a psalm, and the clergyman being at the altar while the psalm is singing, those who attend the funeral as friends of the deceased, approach the altar in succession, and lay on a small bracket, which is provided for the purpose, an offering of money, according to the wealth of the offerer, and the respect of the deceased. I believe it was originally an offering for the support of the clergyman; and the clergy of the ancient British church were supported chiefly by voluntary offerings on public occasions.

When the service is over, the friends who have attended, kneel down on the grave, and say the Lord's prayer before they depart from it; and for several Sundays they return to the grave, and do the same. The friends of the deceased take much pains to deck the grave with flowers. — *Brand's Popular Antiquities.*

The sacred prayer being finished, the funeral service began. After the sublime chapter in Corinthians was read, with a pathos most impressive and affecting, again a psalm was sung.

The female whose excessive grief was so distressfully portrayed, now bore the principal part in the anthem. From the rich melody of her voice, and the sanctity of her demeanour, she appeared like some beatified spirit rather than a creature of this terrestrial sphere.

The clergyman being at the altar, the female mourners in succession approached the sacred spot, and having placed their offering on the bracket, slowly retired. The bier was then lifted, to be carried to the grave.

I found myself strangely drawn into a scene, in which, though I had no concern, I could not help becoming a participator.

The elegant female whose excessive grief had rendered her the most conspicuous

in the group of mourners, now detached herself from the other young maidens, and with streaming eyes, gracefully clasping her hands on her bosom, leant over the grave in speechless sorrow. The hood she wore, intended to shade her face, was, either from violent emotion or for the relief of air, partially thrown back, and displayed her dark auburn ringlets resting on a cheek pale as marble; her eyes flooded with tears, were entirely curtained by her long silken eye lashes. Her slender form seemed to require support, for she was quite borne down and enfeebled by sorrow.

When the earth entirely covered the remains of the departed, the young women strewed flowers, while this celestial being took a white rose,* emblematic of her spotless self, and planted it.

* The white rose is always planted on a virgin's grave.

on the grave, having previously enbalméd it with her tears.

All was now ended—mute in grief the virgin mourners slowly returned to the desolate mansion from whence their young companion was removed, never more to be cheered by the presence of their lamented friend.

Several times I wished to enquire of the by-standers the name of the departed, also that of the beautiful female who had borne so touching a part in the solemn ceremony; but every person was so fully engrossed in the melancholy scene, and every face so deeply marked by sorrow, utterance was denied me; and this rustic, simple funeral, proved infinitely more affecting to the heart, than all the splendid pageantry attendant on the obsequies of the great.

As I traced my steps back to the Inn, I could not but consider my entrance into the village of my ancestors singularly melancholy and depressing. No kindly

cheering voice had bade me welcome. A stranger I certainly was, and as a stranger regarded by the vacant and inquisitive stare cast upon me, as I made my way through the throng of people collected round the inn door, all of whom seemed to have mingled in the ceremony just over, and were speaking to one another in tones of lamentation.

My spirits were affected by the prevailing sadness. Anxious to learn the name and history of the young female whose death appeared to be so universally deplored, on reaching my parlour, I rang for the hostess.

After waiting a considerable time Mrs. Williams made her appearance. She was drest in respectable mourning. She came curtsying into the room, and the corner of her white apron was constantly applied to her tearful eyes.

"The master," said she, in a tone between sobbing and speaking, "asks your honor's pardon for not attending

you himself; for David Williams always waits upon his customers; but this burial has made all the neighbours come in ding dong, and, as the saying is, 'sorrow makes folks dry.' There has not been so great a call for ale since the last wake."

Mrs. Williams might have run on for an hour, she was so full of her subject, had I not interrupted her to enquire whose funeral it was, that excited such a sensation of regret in the village.

"Your honor may well say a sensation," exclaimed she; "I question if a wedding would have caused so great a stir. The young squire's death, not a twelvemonth past till next St. David's day, was nothing to this event. The Lord have mercy on his soul!" ejaculated she, her eyes and hands fervently cast up. "Poor youth! he was taken from this sinful world quite of a sudden, with all his gay pranks and excesses to answer for. O! it was awful to be so hurried,

unprepared, into the presence of his Maker."

"Well, well, Mrs. Williams," interrupted I, somewhat impatiently, "do tell me the name of the young person just interred, instead of this long story?"

"Lydia Powis, Sir; did I not tell you before, Miss Lydia Powis, the flower of the country for beauty. There is the master, David Williams, beside himself, what with sorrow for poor Miss Powis, and the occupation of attending upon the folks."

"The young heiress of the castle," continued she, "God bless and prosper Miss Edelfrida Griffiths, ordered the master to give away as much ale, bread and cheese, as the neighbours could eat and drink, and to spare nothing."

"I am a stranger here, my good woman," said I, "though my mother was a native of this country; therefore you must give me the history of the interesting young lady of the castle; also of Miss Lydia Powis."

“Bless your honor’s heart,” cried she, “it is out of my ability to recount Miss Griffiths’s history, and how her ancestors became possessed of the Castle. I must get the master, David Williams, or his old mother, who knows better than me, to give you all the particulars of the wonderful and terrible things that took place there, long before any of us were born; and enough to make one’s hair stand on end, if the events reported to have happened be true. The devil certainly must have walked abroad, or the rightful heirs could not have been spirited away in the manner related. I have seen with my own eyes the two poor boys, in the form of two young fairies, beneath the arch of Holt bridge, flitting in the moonlight at the time of year they were said to be drowned, and the spot is called “*the Ladies’ arch*,” to this day.*

* Emma, widow of Gruffydd ap Madoc, having a disagreement with her husband’s relations respect-

“Do, my good woman,” cried I, out of all patience, “let these evil spirits walk as

ing the education of her sons, obtained possession of the two eldest, and delivered them up as wards to Edward the First. The one, heir to Bloomfield and Yale, the other, to Chirk and Nauthenday. Madoc took his inheritance to Earl Warren, and Llewelyn to Roger Mortimer, son of Lord Mortimer of Wigmore.

From a MS. in the Bodleian library, Oxford, it appears, the children of the chieftain were drowned under Holt bridge. Emma, the mother, relic of Gryffydd, is implicated in the transaction. But for the fable of the young fairies that at certain times of the year were visible in moonlight nights, the real foundation of the melancholy fact would never perhaps have transpired.

The bridge is a very old and curious structure, having been erected in the year 1348, as appears by an inscription still preserved over the portion termed *the Ladies' Arch*. Edward the First, on the decease of Gryffydd, rewarded two of his favorites with the eldest sons of Gryffyd, Madoc to John Earl Warren, and Llewelyn to Roger Mortimer. The children of the chieftain were drowned under Holt bridge; and at certain times in the year are visible in the moonlight nights under the Ladies' Arch. Roger Mortimer became possessor of Chirk Castle, after having dispatched the youths, and possessed himself, with Earl Warren, of their fortune.—*Pennant's Wales*.

they may, only, in the meanwhile, inform me, what cause translated the happier one of Miss Powis to the regions of the blessed."

"A broken heart, Sir."

"You don't mean to say," I replied, "she died for love? No, no, my good woman; we read such things in romance; but trust me, the heart, finely, delicately as its cords are constructed, and tenderly vibrating to the touch of joy or woe, do not thus break, so as never to be played on more."

"Play'd on, your honor! It was no play to poor Miss Lydia Powis. She grew quite crazy, when she heard the young squire was killed in hunting the stag. A cruel, wicked sport to hunt the life out of such a fine animal. Miss Powis from that hour took to lonely walks, and melancholy ways. She was engaged to marry Squire Griffiths; but the family did not believe it would ever be a match, he was so wild, and led away by bad

company; he was a handsome youth, and had very insinuating manners of his own, to win the ladies' hearts; which made poor Miss Lydia take on as she did, and pined away, till she pined herself into an untimely grave."

"Poor young lady! To whom," added I, changing the subject, "does Gwayn^{*} Castle belong? To Miss Edelfrida Griffiths. She is a noble-spirited young lady, and knows that the most *excellent of all gifts is charity.*' The poor have reason to bless her name, for she causeth the widow's heart to sing for joy."

"Miss Griffiths," continued Mrs. Williams, "was the chief mourner in the funeral procession, and a true mourner she was, for she loved Miss Powis with the tenderness of a sister, instead of a cousin, though she was not of such high degree as herself."

"They were cousins then."

* Welsh for Chick.

“Yes, Sir; Miss Edelfrida’s father, Owen Griffiths, was twice married. The young Squire was by his first lady, Miss Griffiths by the second: she was sister to Miss Powis’s mother.”

“Then Owen Griffiths degraded himself by his second marriage.”

“Degraded indeed!” cried Mrs. Williams testily, with a toss of her head, in evident displeasure; “I don’t know what you mean by degraded! Had the old Squire Griffiths, indeed, married some base-born person, or one of those women that go about the country called stage-players, which some of your English nobility had done, and can have little fear of God before their eyes, seeing, as they must, all sort of immorality in their play books, then you might, Sir, have said, that Squire Griffiths degraded himself.”

“Miss Edelfrida’s mother (she continued, with all the warmth of a Welsh woman) was not an equal match, perhaps,

in respect of money, like his first lady ; but what of that. She had more noble Welsh blood in her veins, and could count her genealogy with the most ancient family in the Principality. She was born and bred up in yonder glen, on the banks of the Ceiriog ; and for beauty and gentility, she had not her equal in these parts.

“ But I must have done, Sir, with this long colloquy ; I hear the master, David Williams, calling after me ; so if your honor will be pleased to tell me what you would like for supper, it shall be made ready as soon as possible.”

I was little inclined to eat, however, I ordered the best fare they had in the house, and dismissed my talkative landlady.

It was easily discovered from several turns in Mrs. Williams’s discourse, she was not a member of the established church. I afterwards found she belonged to a singular sect, which had spread over various parts of Wales, particularly in

the remoter parts, denominated the Jumpers.*

* Originally this singular practice of *jumping* during the time allotted for religious worship and instruction was confined to the people called Methodists in Wales, the followers of Harris, Rowland, Williams, and others. The practice began in the western part of the country, about the year ——. It was soon after defended by Mr. William Williams (the Welsh poet, as he is sometimes styled) in a pamphlet, which was patronized by the abettors of jumping in religious assemblies, but viewed by the serious and the grave with disapprobation. However, in the course of a few years, the advocates of groaping and loud talking, as well as of loud singing, repeating the same line or stanza over and over thir or forty times, became more numerous, and were found among some of the other denominations in the Principality, and continue to this day. Several of the most zealous itinerant preachers in Wales recommended the people to cry *Gogoniant* (the Welsh for *glory*) amen, and to put themselves into violent agitations, and finally to *jump* till they were quite exhausted, so as often to be obliged to fall down on the floor, or on the field, where this kind of worship was held.

The arguments adduced for this purpose are, that David danced before the ark, that the babe leaped in the womb of Elizabeth, and the man, whose lameness was relieved, *leaped*, and praised God for the mercy which he had received. — *Evans's Sketch of the Denominations of the Christian world*,

An opportunity was afforded me, at their annual association, of seeing the zealous fanaticism of these misguided people. The uncle of Mrs. Williams was one of their preachers. Curiosity tempted me to accompany her to witness a scene at once extraordinary and humiliating. Their worship bordered more upon paganism than that of a civilized and piously inclined people.

Fain would I have argued with Mrs. Williams on her blind error; for I was inexpressibly shocked, when I beheld the mangled spectacle which she had made of herself. Her hair was dishevelled, her garments discomposed and torn, her countenance distorted; indeed, it was melancholy to behold the change which a few hours had made in the appearance of so decent and respectable a woman, who usually comported herself so well. She was proof, however, against all persuasion. With ignorant and vulgar minds, there is always a resolute bigotry

that no argument can root out. Perhaps, there is no point in which individuals are so wedded to their own opinions as in that of religion.

I determined, ere I pursued my journey further into the principality, to spend a few more days at Gwayn, that I might not only visit the abode of my maternal ancestors, but the ancient castle, now rendered no indifferent object from being the abode of Miss Griffiths. The touching part she had borne in the late mournful ceremony, had deeply impressed me with sentiments of the tenderest veneration. The affecting melody of her voice still vibrated on my ear, and, as I beheld in "*my mind's eye*," her drooping yet elegant form, bending in anguish over the coffin of her lamented friend, I almost imagined her a benignant angel sent to conduct the departed spirit to the celestial regions of the blessed.

When the name of my mother became known to my host, I was overpowered by his civilities. I found her paternal dwelling, Gwynelly, was seated in the vale of Ceiriog, on the banks of that beautiful little river.

Mr. Williams insisted on being my guide thither. We set off, attended by half the ragged boys and girls of the village.

Before we branched out of the high road, I was presented with a fine view of the noble aqueduct, forming a picturesque and grand object, standing between the richly wooded banks which appeared to give it support, as the central arches rose in graceful beauty in the midst of a luxuriant valley, shewing the gay and verdant pastures between each opening. Above rose the majestic mountain scenery, half shrouded in sloping woods.

Passing between the umbrageous trees of a thick coppice, we all at once emerged into a pastoral glade, and crossed the

rustic Pont* Faen, thrown over the murmuring Ceiriog, which wanders at the foot of the woods, until it loses itself amidst the hills.

In one of the shady dingles, on the confines of this romantic and crystal river, a handsome white house appeared through a partial opening of the trees which embowered it. A number of small sashed windows gave the mansion an old fashioned aspect of yet superior importance. The door opened into an ancient porch, richly entwined with exuberant honeysuckles.

"There is Gwynelly house, Sir," said Mr. Williams, pointing his hand in the direction where it stood. "It has seen more than one tenant since your worthy mother, Mrs. Gwyn, was the occupier. It now belongs to poor Mrs. Powis. The day of Miss Lydia's death was the most sorrowful, she, good lady, ever

* A bridge.

saw. Miss Powis was the flower of the glen, as the mistress told your honor. The sun never shone on a more beautiful young lady."

While I contemplated this now desolate mansion, and reflected that little more than half a century had passed since my mother had enlivened this romantic spot with her youthful pastimes, perhaps planted the very honeysuckles now so gaily flaunting in the sunshine, and like its late beautiful inhabitant was now sleeping in the silent grave—"Such," I mentally exclaimed, as I brushed a tear from mine eye, "are all sublunary things!" After a few years only, we return to the same scene of early enjoyment, and in vain look around for those well known objects which formed our hours of bliss! They are for ever departed! and the smiling appearance of all nature seems but a mockery of our grief by remaining in its primæval loveliness!

Fain would I have approached this in-

teresting mansion, but delicacy forbade intrusion ; and with reluctance I traced my steps back to the inn.

Mrs. Williams during my absence had dispatched a messenger from me, with a request for permission to view the interior of Gwayn Castle.

A few lines, written in an elegant hand, were returned, acceding to my wishes ; again my host became my conductor.

During our walk through the noble park, richly grouped in every direction with venerable trees, Mr. Williams, as we proceeded up the long and shady avenue, entertained me with the same tale my mother so often had related, and I found was strongly attested as authentic, from a manuscript preserved in the castle.

On approaching this ancient and magnificent domain, my desire increased to see the baronial hall, where such extraordinary scenes had been acted, and carried a spirit of romance along with them, that seemed to outstep probability.

This heavy fabric, formed of greenstone, appeared to be of extreme antiquity, and devoid of all architectural beauty from its ponderous and clumsy construction, yet it possessed an air of grandeur that bespoke the baronial state of feudal times. The castle is a square building, with five bastions full of loophole windows crossed with iron bars, not unlike those of a prison ; the ramparts surmounted by a watch tower ; and into this gloomy edifice we found entrance through a heavy gateway overhung by a portcullis.

The eye was most agreeably relieved by the contrasted beauty of the smiling landscape, presenting an extensive and luxuriant prospect. Sixteen counties were discernible from the eminence on which I stood. Cader Ferwyn and the lofty Berwyn mountains formed a barrier between Denbigh and Merionethshire, while the Ceiriog meandered in pellucid beauty through the valley.

Gwayn Castle, situated above a mile

from the village, is so entirely buried in rich and extensive woods, as not to be discerned until a near approach, when it bursts at once upon the eye in lovely and majestic grandeur.

Since the period of its first possessor, Sir Roger Mortimer, the castle had lineally descended to the rightful heirs, Owen ap Gryffydd, and the collateral branches.

On being admitted into the ancient court, the housekeeper, of a most venerable appearance and courteous manners, stood at the entrance of the great hall, to conduct me through the suit of apartments. My talkative landlord, before he withdrew, took the old woman aside, and whispered something in her ear, with a very significant look. She immediately fixed her eyes upon me with an expression that denoted something like pleasure, as well as surprise; and advancing to me with redoubled respect, dropt a low curtsy.

“I knew your worthy parents well, Mr. Fortescue,” she exclaimed, “and am heartily glad to see the son of the dear good lady, your late mother. Ah! Sir, many a day we have played together in the honeysuckle porch, in yon white house called Gwynelly, on the banks of the Ceiriog. Miss Gwyn was known to every one by the name of pretty Miss Alice of the vale. But times, Mr. Fortescue, are changed since then; I am grown old and feeble, and, God help me, have outlived almost every body in these parts, and seen more than one generation carried to the grave.”

Mrs. Lloyd, though verging on seventy, was a hale good looking woman, drest in the old fashion, with a cap and pinners; her venerable silver hair, drawn tight over a cushion, exposed her open unwrinkled forehead to view. Her dark eyes, though somewhat dimmed by age, still retained a mild radiance that proved the index to a placid temper, unruffled by care.

"I suppose, Sir," she continued, "Master Williams has pointed out to you the house in the dingle, just on the other side Pont Faen, where your parents lived, now converted into the house of mourning and lamentation."

She was proceeding, when the opening and shutting of the great doors reverberated through the gallery, and the dignified figure of a female drest in black, moved with light steps towards us. On seeing a stranger, she was going to retreat; but after a momentary pause, she proceeded to the spot where we stood. We were now in contact with each other. She gracefully curtseyed, and in a low soft voice addressed Mrs. Lloyd.

"Do not suffer the stranger to depart," I heard her say, "without offering him the ancient rights of hospitality, which I hope will never be omitted in Gwayn Castle. While the gentleman takes some refreshment, desire the harper, Mrs. Lloyd, to play some of our national airs."

Though it is now many days since notes of merriment sounded through the hall, after a proper season, old established customs must be resumed, even if the heart be not attuned to such pastime."

After another slight obeisance, the lady, who at a first glance I recognized for Miss Griffiths, gracefully passed on.

"That is so like Miss Griffiths," exclaimed Mrs. Lloyd, with a sort of proud elevation of her head. "She is always considerate and polite. The harp has not indeed sounded in the castle since poor Miss Powis's death ; but my young lady thinks it sinful to encourage grief, now that her cousin is removed. Miss Griffiths is just returned from Gwynelly, where she has been trying to comfort poor Mrs. Powis, for she cannot prevail upon her to leave her melancholy home."

The gallery in which we stood, a hundred feet in length, occupied one entire side of the quadrangle, and looked into a gloomy paved court. The walls of the

gallery were crowded with portraits, some of them bearing marks of great antiquity, as appeared from the characters and costumes of the personages they meant to represent.

One large piece, containing a variety of figures, particularly arrested my attention, from the manner in which they were grouped, and the singularity of the subject.

The scene was an ancient and gloomy hall, in which was spread a long table, filled with a number of personages gorgeously apparelled, as if for a bridal festival. A beautiful young woman, with a countenance marked by deep dejection, sat at the upper end of the table, on the right hand of a man, whose air, though noble, was stern; and whose eyes darted with a piercing and suspicious curiosity towards a youth clad in the simple habit of a minstrel, and who had placed himself, though apparently out of observation, yet in a posture that afforded him

the opportunity of watching, with the earnestness expressed in his countenance, every movement of the couple seated side by side at the head of the table. The steward of the household held a golden cup in his hand, which he was in the act of presenting to the master of the feast ; and who, Mrs. Lloyd informed me, had given a toast, when the noble personage seated beside the young lady, desired to drink "*Iechyd y nenbren y-ty*," the cordial phrase, which signifies *health to the upper beam of the house*, supposed to be the head or master.

I turned to Mrs. Lloyd for an explanation of this striking picture, executed in a masterly and powerful manner.

"The subject," she replied, "of the piece, describes an extraordinary event which happened at a wedding banquet in this castle some centuries ago, with the personages that presided at the feast. The history is related in a MS. carefully preserved here, of the Lady Elynas disastrous

union, and the terrible catastrophe which immediately followed." I now beheld represented in this piece, the actors in the tragical history my mother so often had related. I contemplated their various countenances and figures with mingled interest and horror. An ardent desire was excited to peruse the manuscript ; but to have that desire accomplished, seemed, at present at least, to be impossible.

Having slightly examined several other portraits, I was conducted through a suite of stately apartments into the saloon, and lastly, into a small eating room, where refreshments were spread. The harper, according to orders, was placed in the hall, and delighted me during the slight repast of which I partook, with several national airs, wild as his native mountains, but full of melody and expression.

After spending two or three hours at Gwayn Castle, I found the ponderous gate closed upon me with a sensation I could hardly define, and which seemed at once

to shut out from me every thing precious and interesting in existence. The feeling I now experienced, only a month before I would have ridiculed in another. But of late there had been such a blank in my life, I found myself so isolated a being, the radiant form of Edelfrida Griffiths hovered round me, and awakened a tenderness in my bosom that ardently courted her friendship, her love. Perhaps it was the benignant sweetness that beamed from her eyes as she passed me in the gallery, that first led me to cherish the vague hope that we might afterwards be acquainted. I had first beheld Miss Griffiths under no ordinary circumstances. The late scene in which she had been engaged, the touching grief that showed itself in her whole deportment, and spoke so eloquently the anguish of her heart, as she performed the last tribute of love to the memory of her friend, in the white rose which she had planted on her grave, washing with her tears the drooping

flower, all conspired to fill me with reverence and adoration.

I returned to the inn musing on the past, and on the probable events of the future.

Solitary and restless, I was invited by the refreshing coolness of the afternoon towards the spot which had been pointed out to me as at present occupied by Mrs. Powis; a vagrant hope possessed my mind, that the angelic creature I had only a few hours before beheld at the castle, might again break on my sight, in the deserted haunts of her lamented companion.

Lost in meditation, I hung over the little rustic Pont Faen, and watched the rapid course of the brilliant Ceiriog, as it flowed in pellucid coolness at the verge of the pensile trees which richly shaded its banks, with the sun-beams dancing in silver globes on its crystal bosom. A

long line of sweeping wood partially shaded the landscape, while an opening vista presented the broad grey towers of the castle, crowned by their feathery tops.

Every sound was rural, and in harmony with the soft and tranquil scene. The whispering breeze, the mournful plaint of the stock dove, the low of the reposing cattle, the tinkling of the sheep bell, the merry distant voices of the reapers, served all to revive the description of the poets who have so exquisitely painted these pastoral landscapes.

A group of ragged children followed a small herd of cattle, which a girl, who appeared about sixteen, was tending to the side of the river to taste of its refreshing water. She possessed all the beauty of the Welsh peasantry. The dark refulgent eye, clear brown complexion, with the damask rose glowing on her cheek; on her head she wore a round black hat, which neither shaded her face nor con-

cealed her dark glossy tresses ; her air was rustic, but it was not vulgar. She tript down the hill with lightness and agility, for her feet were not confined by shoes and stockings ; nor was her short striped petticoat, and blue and white kirtle of the same, unbecoming to her round and well proportioned figure. She warbled a wild roundelay, as she busily continued knitting her stocking, and conducted the cows to the brink of the Ceiriog.

One animal plunged deep into the pellucid stream. In vain the girl endeavoured to lure the creature back. She placed herself on a sloping bank, that almost unites itself with Pont Faen ; but bending with incautious precipitation forwards, she was suddenly plunged into the impetuous river.

A fearful cry issued in a moment from the children who were dabbling at the edge of the water. Not an instant was to be lost. The water, though rapid, was

in this part so shallow, its pebbly bottom was visible to the naked eye.

Unheedful of danger, I sprang into the stream, just in time to save her from destruction. I bore her lifeless form in my arms to one of the cottages which lie scattered at the end of the bridge ; and so full was I of anxious solicitude for her restoration to life, I regarded not the persons by whom I was surrounded, till roused by a tender plaintive voice which addressed me in a tremulous accent, " Do you think, Sir," said the person " she is dead ?" while at the same time I felt the gentle pressure of a hand upon my arm.

I looked up, and beheld Miss Griffiths. " Oh ! be quick," she added, with emotion, " in conveying poor Maudlin* to this cottage. Let no means be untried to recover animation. You too, dear Sir, will be rewarded ; you have acted nobly,

* Margaret.

It is not merely a deed of sympathetic kindness, but a deed of infinite humanity; you have saved more than one fellow-creature. Maudlin Hughes is every thing to her aged helpless grandmother. She is her support, her joy, her comfort. The blessing, Sir, of this poor wretched family will follow your steps. The act will be recorded in heaven; and your benevolence will shed a sunshine over your mind no earthly calamity will be able to destroy."

I was overpowered with the praises which fell thus eloquently from the lips of Miss Griffiths. It was well the lifeless form of Maudlin did not drop out of my arms; but another step brought us within the cottage, and Miss Griffiths assisted in laying the young girl on the homely bed of the poor woman.

Now it was that Miss Griffiths displayed not only the native humanity of her character, but her skill and strength of mind. She was not satisfied

with merely ordering what was to be done, but she applied every necessary restorative herself, with a quickness and tender vigilance, that in a woman of her high condition delighted and surprised me. She hung with impatient anxiety over poor Maudlin, watching with solicitude her faded countenance, that she might catch the first vital spark of restored existence.

“Leave me, Mr. Fortescue, I intreat,” said she, with an expressive look of supplication, after we had placed Maudlin on the bed, “till I can bring the joyful tidings that you have again spread happiness around the lonely dwelling of a fellow-creature.”

“Your presence,” she added, with a tone of embarrassment, “disarms me of that collectedness required at this important crisis ; therefore I pray you go. Hereafter I shall be proud in the acquaintance of a person who did not consider it beneath the dignity of a gentleman to risk

his life in the service of so insignificant a being as a poor peasant girl. A girl, however, who is a guardian angel to her venerable grandmother ; and who, by her industry, piety, and virtue, gladdens the declining years of a poor blind old woman."

Miss Griffiths's eloquent and flattering speech more than repaid me for all the peril which I had encountered. I found myself so deeply in love as to have forgotten the danger of wet clothes.

"You have saved one life, Sir," she said, "that is precious, and have shown there remains another equally valuable to be preserved. Allow me then to turn your physician, and command you immediately to withdraw to the next cottage, where some change of raiment may be had, until yours is brought from the inn. "For," added Miss Griffiths, with a gracious smile, "if you disobey, we perhaps shall meet no more."

"Heaven avert," cried I, with vehe-

mence, "so cruel a destiny ! Lady, you first have taught me that the life of a solitary individual is not quite valueless. That it has now proved useful, will be one of my most delightful recollections. It is surely worth some risk to be alone rewarded by one engaging smile of approbation from Miss Griffiths, whose native tenderness of character is only surpassed by a firmness, a greatness of soul, which rarely belongs to persons of such melting sensibility. These exalted qualities are so happily combined, Madam, in you, what heart can resist being subdued—what man sufficient stoic not to express his admiration, I had almost said adoration."

A crimson blush passed over the cheek of Miss Griffiths, which brilliantly lighted up her fine eyes as they beamed upon me, as I softly stole out of the apartment.

The subsequent conversation excited sensations so new, as for a time to render

me insensible of the bad consequences attendant upon wet clothes.

On my return to the inn, I was seized with cold shiverings, and passed the night in feverish restlessness. On the following morning I was unable to leave my chamber.

The tidings of my enterprize had spread not only over the whole neighbourhood, but the humanity of the stranger gentleman rang throughout the village, in having rescued Maudlin Hughes from a watery grave. The inn door was besieged, at an early hour, with people inquiring after me.

Before nine o'clock, Mrs. Williams tapt at my room door, and without waiting for leave to be admitted, she was at my bed side. "Poor old blind Dame Hughes," said she, "and her aged husband, almost as helpless as herself, are just come down all the way from the Dingle to inquire for your honor. I

could hardly stop them from falling down on their knees in the entry, to ask a blessing for you, in saving the girl Maudlin's life. Your name, Sir, will be remembered in those parts as long as a Griffiths and a Hughes live to tell the story of your goodness."

"Master Hughes," continued my landlady, "and his dame would very fain see your honor only just for a minute, to offer you their blessing ; but she, good old soul, cannot for the matter of that see you, though it would be a satisfaction to express her gratitude and thanks. She has put on her best flowered gown, her coif, and new beaver hat, which Miss Griffiths gave her to go to the church in on Sundays ; so pray, Sir, do see the good old folks."

I wished not to be oppressed with the acknowledgments of the worthy couple, for an act of mere humanity ; and I found myself so much indisposed, I would rather have declined admitting them ; however,

Mrs. Williams was urgent, and I was obliged to comply.

The venerable pair, who appeared to be verging on eighty, were led by my hostess into the chamber.

"Down on your knees, Master Hughes," exclaimed the old woman, at the same time bending her own feeble ones. "Down on your knees, I say, in gratitude to the Almighty, for sending this good, humane gentleman to save our poor daughter Maudlin's child."

"The blessing of God," she sobbed out, "be on your honor's head for ever, and prosper all your undertakings."

"If, Sir," exclaimed the venerable old man, "you ever have children of your own, then you will know what a comfort they are, and how sore a trial it is to have them taken away, more particularly when old and helpless. But the Lord is good and gracious! may we be thankful for all his benefits."

"These sightless eyes," interrupted

Dame Hughes, "cannot, God help me, look upon your honor's blessed face ; but if you will excuse such a great freedom, I would just ask leave to press your hand, and wet it with a tear of thankfulness. It is the first I have shed since my poor daughter Maudlin was carried to her grave ; and I should be glad, Sir, to show this poor token of respect to your honor, as the blessed preserver of our dear little grandchild."

The venerable grey headed man led his aged partner to my pillow.

I extended my hand towards them. Dame Hughes grasped it with a cordial pressure, and large drops filled both their eyes. One or two actually fell upon my hand, and I was obliged to hastily withdraw it, for the scene was affecting. "You over-rate," I said, "the benefit which I have rendered you, my venerable friends. Before my departure, I shall further inquire into your circumstances, and en-

deavour to render your declining years more easy and comfortable."

I consigned the worthy pair to Mrs. Williams's charge, to give them some refreshment, and they left my chamber overwhelming me with thanks and blessings.

They had scarcely departed ere my hostess returned with a letter in her hand, which she informed me came from the Castle, and the messenger waited an answer.

It was from Miss Griffiths. The writing seemed to dance before mine eyes, as I vainly attempted to read it; for my head was giddy from the effect of illness, and I could not hold a joint still.

At length I made out, that it was a note of inquiry after my health, and an invitation to dinner at the Castle, to meet Mr. Morgan the curate, and Mrs. Powis. Ill as I was, I accepted the invitation.

Miss Griffiths' precious little billet, I

carefully preserved, by placing it in my bosom. That I might be able to go to the Castle, I rose and endeavoured to dress myself; but my limbs trembled so violently, I could not stand, and found it a vain attempt to quit my chamber. It seemed then more than probable that I might be confined in this lovely but remote village by a protracted illness; but the idea, so far from alarming me, rather proved a source of satisfaction, since it would detain me in the vicinity of Edelfrida Griffiths, in whose bosom it appeared I had excited some degree of anxiety and interest.

I despatched my man to the next town for medical advice, and had thrown myself on the bed in mournful musing, when Mrs. Williams announced that Mr. Morgan, the curate, requested paying his respects to me. I did not hesitate admitting the worthy pastor. Indeed I had two motives for so doing; he would inform Miss Griffiths of my illness—he

would engage her sympathy; and there is a tenderness in sympathy, where the object excites interest, which is in some degree allied to love. If Mr. Morgan proved a sensible intelligent man, his society and conversation would beguile my solitude, and prevent the well intentioned but often too officious attendance and perpetual prate of my talkative landlady.

Mr. Morgan was shown into me.

He had an open benignant countenance, with an honest simplicity of character in his appearance, that was very prepossessing. With the men and manners of the world he seemed to have no acquaintance. He had never been beyond his native mountains. His dress partook of the air and simplicity of his demeanour. His complexion was florid and healthful, and his features bore the marked expression of meekness and content. He was perfectly simple and guileless in his address, and a stranger to the servile courtesy of those who flatter their

benefactors for the sake of the loaves and fishes. He was evidently poor, for his thread-bare coat and darned worsted hose bespoke a narrow stipend; but he was dignified and cheerful in his discourse, which was seasoned with becoming sanctity; and like all aborigines, he spoke with rapturous enthusiasm of the beauties of his native mountains, the patriotism of his nation, and the uncomplaining sufferings of the poor.

One theme on which he touched was music to my ears. It was the excellence of Miss Griffiths.

“She has already,” said Mr. Morgan*, “done much to ameliorate the condition of the poor. If,” he added, “this good and virtuous young lady dwells constantly on her domain, not a heart but will bound with joy in this part of the principality. Husbandry again begins to flourish—the

* Mr. Morgan’s speech alludes to the present possessor of Chirk Castle.

lowest labourer now has bread to give his children—the peasant does not toil in vain—even the ancient bards will be revived—the music and poetry of the ancient Cambrians again sound in the hall—the hand of the minstrel is no longer cold, for music and song gladdens our festivities; our olden customs are now revived, on a summer evening when the labours of the day are ended, the hinds of the village are seen bounding the ball.* The old women, as you must have remarked, are collected under that noble sycamore, sitting on the rustic bench, beneath its lofty and shady branches, garrulous with news while they knit their stocking !”

The venerable curate’s countenance shone with delight, his eyes sparkled at the animated picture which he had drawn “Gwayn Castle, Sir,” he continued, “is a magnificent pile of antiquity;” and—

* A common rural pastime in North Wales.

The medical gentleman being announced, Mr. Morgan took leave, with an invitation from me to repeat the favor of his visit, not only on the present day, but many succeeding ones. I was obliged to submit to the confinement of my chamber, and forego my proposed visit to Gwayn Castle. I believe the impatient irritability of my temper, in being continually thwarted in my wishes, impeded my recovery.

The benevolent curate came and spent an hour with me every evening, and I had the consolation of hearing that enquiries were made continually after my health from Miss Griffiths.

I was surprised by Mrs. Williams putting before me many little dainties, drest with a nicety I was sure she could not be skilled in ; and while she gave all due praise to the food, there was a significant expression in her countenance, which at first I could not define. The choicest fruits also were presented for desert.

At length I said, "that I hoped she had not taken the liberty of asking for any of the delicacies which I saw before me from the Castle, as the village was not able to furnish such provision; and I should be seriously displeased if she had used so improper a freedom."

Mrs. Williams smiled and nodded.

"The housekeeper and gardener," she said, "have received orders to send your honor every day what is required for your table. It is not of my asking, I assure you," she continued, somewhat testily. "Miss Griffiths knows very well the master's poor little inn could not, Sir, provide you with what is proper for a sick person; and with her usual thoughtfulness for every body, Miss Griffiths has remembered your honor."

I was at a loss how to act: to allow such kind consideration to remain unacknowledged appeared a slight to Miss Griffiths's flattering attention to a solitary, invalid stranger. But as, with a

propriety that became the native delicacy of her character by not signifying from whence these dainties came, I judged it the wiser part to remain neuter ; and if a favourable opportunity ever occurred, to tender then my acknowledgments.

Miss Griffiths's former invitation enabled me to pay my respects at the Castle ; and I was at the expiration of a week sufficiently recovered to ride thither. The curate offered me his company, but I evaded his proposal, for I did not wish any person to interrupt my interview with Miss Griffiths.

The porter, on hearing my name, gave it to the footman with profound respect ; and desired him to shew Mr. Fortescue to his lady.

A nervous tremor came over my whole frame. I will not pretend to say whether it proceeded from my late illness, or any other cause ; but when the saloon door was opened to usher me into the apartment which Miss Griffiths occu-

pied, I felt very confused and oddly. My name, as the man pronounced it, seemed to reverberate through the lofty room, for it made Edelfrida start, as she rose from the table where she was drawing, to meet me.

In a moment, however, she recovered her self-possession. With a frank politeness she extended her white hand towards me, and cordially bade me welcome, but a crimson glow suffused her cheek, while in a faltering voice she enquired if I was perfectly recovered.

“At least, Madam,” cried I, with animation, “this visit ought to make me well. Who can feel any casual evil who has the pleasure of beholding Miss Griffiths. Your presence can alone diffuse joy to those who have the honor of knowing you.”

“A truce with compliment,” she exclaimed, with vivacity, “for I’ll none of it. You gentlemen who live in the great metropolis consider them, I believe, as the

only certain passport to win a lady's favor."

"When Sir," she continued more seriously, "you know Edelfrida Griffiths better, you will then find that you have won her esteem on a less flimsy foundation."

"But," continued she, "allow me to ask whether you find yourself sufficiently recovered to dine here to-morrow. I expect my cousin, Mrs. Powis, and shall introduce some of my neighbours. The worthy curate, Mr. Morgan, I find, has been to visit you. He is an intelligent man, and like all the Welsh, an enthusiastic lover of his country and warm-hearted."

"I should little, Madam," cried I, half smiling, "have benefited by your provident care of an invalid stranger in supplying me with so many rarities from your Castle, if I were not now quite well."

"Oh," interrupted Miss Griffiths care-

lessly "I will not, Sir, affect not to comprehend your meaning. We are so abundant in game, fish, fruits, &c., it is a kindness in Mrs. Williams to accept these superabundant things for the use of her house, which it would inconvenience her to procure." I could only bow in return for her delicacy and politeness.

"I shall," continued she, changing the subject, "have the pleasure, Sir, tomorrow of presenting your protégée, Maudlin Hughes. She is now able to resume her duteous attendance upon her aged grandmother, and the necessary occupation of her household. I find the poor old couple paid you a visit. They were industrious people in their day, and deserve support in their declining years, when feebleness, blindness, and disease have further disabled them from obtaining a comfortable livelihood. Perhaps you would like to see their dwelling. The Welsh peasantry, in general, want activity and cleanliness; but poor

Dame Hughes was an example to her neighbours of piety, neatness, and industry. I often look into the condition of the cottagers ; and Mrs. Powis and myself will have great pleasure in accompanying you to Dame Hughes's, if it is agreeable."

The servant, at the moment I was going to reply, ushered in a large party of morning visitors ; I therefore took my leave, with a promise to return to dinner on the morrow.

To be admitted a guest at Gwayn Castle was a felicity which I could hardly have promised myself ; and with impatient anxiety I counted the hours which were again to bring me within the portal of that magnificent domain. The small social circle to which I was invited, would afford me an opportunity of more closely observing the genuine taste and pursuits of Miss Griffiths than all the casual intercourse of formal visits, prompted by cold ceremony, in which the heart takes

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 d to spring from the spontaneous benign-
 ity of her temper, which indeed beamed
 in her eyes, with an expression that was
 celestial. Her air was pensive, from the
 recent loss which she had sustained ; her
 accents were soft ; and though her voice
 was deep-toned, it had a thrilling tender-
 ness that touched the heart.

Miss Griffiths not only endeavoured to
 promote conversation, but she bore a
 principal part ; and I found her mind
 richly stored by extensive reading. She

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extremely desirous of
original beauties and sublimity,
compositions of the Welsh bards,
very ably maintained her ground in the
specimens which she deduced; much to
my instruction on a subject so new to
me, as well as entertainment.

“Your nation, Madam,” said I, “in
former ages boasted, it is true, of the
ancient bards; but they cannot like us,
claim such poets as a Shakespear, a Mil-
ton, or a Dryden, to render themselves
immortal. Every work loses its original
beauty and pathos by translation.”

“There is an imposing sublimity in the
sound of the Welsh poetry on the ear;
but, like the Gaelic of Ossian, can only
be understood by a native to be tasted
and enjoyed.”

“I admit,” said Miss Griffiths, “there

is some truth in your observation, and that the genuine beauty and spirit of the poet must become impoverished when he falls into the hands of the translator; yet I cannot altogether subscribe to your opinion, that Wales has not produced some fine specimens of poetry, which will immortalize the bard, as at least on an equality with Gray."

"At this moment," proceeded she, "I can bring forward an existing proof of the tenderness, expression, and simplicity of the Welsh bards. I will read you the dirge, composed by a friend, which was sung at the grave of my lamented cousin, Lydia Powis. Mr. Morgan has translated it; therefore you shall hear it, Sir, first in the original; afterwards in the English tongue."*

* The author is indebted to the Rev. Walter Davies, rector of Manafon, Montgomeryshire, for the following elegant lines. She is also indebted to Dr. L—— for a literal translation. Versification has not been attempted, as it would have spoiled the simplicity and beauty of the dirge.

Sung at a Church-yard gate, at the funeral of
a pious young female.

I.

O wele'r ferçh—ar elor fud,
O fwynder byd ar fyn'd i'r bedd;
A glaned oedd goleuni ei dawn,
Wylo a gawn—mae'n wael ei gwedd!

II.

Ond megis seren gwen ei gwawr,
Hi a gwyd o'i llawr gan newid llun;
Câ newydd wisg o noddfa wiw,
Yr Jesu Dduw, fu'n isel ddyn.

III.

O byr yw'n taith, gwnawn barotôï,
Cyn i'r ing glaf yr angeu gloi,
I'r dewr a'r balch, ar dir y byw,
I'r hyfryd wedd—O fyred yw!

IV.

Mor fyr yw'n llwydd, mor frau yw'n lles,
Mor fyr a'r tARTH ar foreu tês!
Ai byr ai hir fo ei barhâd,
Rhown weddi daer ar Dduw—O Dad!

V.

Am allwedd rhinwedd y Mab Rhad,
I nofio i wledd y nefol wlad,
Nad allo'r angeu beri braw,
Ond bod ein trwydded i'r byd draw.

WALTER DAVIES,

Rector of Manafon, Montgomeryshire.

TRANSLATION.

Behold the damsel on the silent bier, going from the pleasure of the world! How fair so ever the light was of her beauty (weep we may,) her state now is humble.

But, like a star white* in brightness, she shall arise from the ground. Having changed her form she will have a new garment from the blessed habitation of Jesus God, once an humble man.

O short is our journey! Let us make preparation before the bitter pang of swift death. To the tyrannical and proud on the land of the living, and to the loveliest countenance, oh! how short it is!

How brief is our prosperity! How frail is our profit! As brief as the vapour in a glowing morning! Whether short or long be its continuance, let us earnest prayer to God present.

For the merits of the merciful Son, as our helm to steer us to the banquet of that celestial country—that death may not excite terror—and that we may accomplish our passage to yonder world!

It was impossible not to admire the translation, which Miss Griffiths read with a sweetness and pathos, that ren-

* White is always used to express beauty.

dered them quite affecting. The lines bore so striking an affinity to a translation from the Gaelic which I remembered to have seen in Pennant's tour through Scotland, I begged leave to refer to the volume, and found the epitaph on a young lady in the church of Glenorchy, in the West Highlands.

Miss Griffiths requested me to read it—it *was* as follows—

“Low she lies here in the dust, and
“her memory fills me with grief: silent
“is the tongue of melody, and the hand
“of elegance is now at rest.”

“No more shall the poor give thee his
“blessing; nor shall the naked be warmed
“ed with the fleece of thy flock. The
“tear shalt thou not wipe away from the
“eye of the wretched. Where, now, Oh
“feeble is thy wanted help!”

“No more my fair shall we meet thee
“in the social hall: no more shall we sit
“at thy hospitable board. Gone for ever
“is the sound of mirth: the kind, the

“candid, the meek is now no more.
“ Who can express our grief! Flow, ye
“ tears of woe!”

On the entrance of Mrs. Powis, to whom I was introduced, the subject of funeral poetry was immediately dropt.

That of the Welsh bards was however resumed by Mr. Morgan, who said, “That in days of yore, except in courts, none of the English nation retained a bard or minstrel, whereas, throughout the Principality, every family of condition possessed their bard. They were formed into different classes; and were not only poets, but historians and genealogists; and also celebrated those who were distinguished for excellence in all respects. The domestic bard who lived in the mansion, celebrated not only the exploits of their ancestors, but those of the existing family, and sung their virtues in effusions of poetry during each festive entertainment.”

“ There is,” interrupted Miss Griffiths,

“an original painting in the gallery of this Castle, which is too striking to have escaped, Sir, your observation; wherein is portrayed a beautiful young minstrel, who acted a very conspicuous part in the history connected with that picture.”

“I observed, Madam,” I replied, “the piece to which you allude, with considerable interest and curiosity. The subject, I understood, is attached to a legend which, if I mistake not, is preserved in this Castle. The leading events, I have heard my mother relate a hundred times.”

“The manuscript,” replied Miss Griffiths, “is most extraordinary; and shews the barbarity of that remote period, when so dire a tragedy was acted at a nuptial banquet. But to what violence will not evil passions betray us, if we do not endeavour to check our wayward dispositions.”

“The advantages of an enlightened education,” said I, “were then, Ma-

dam unknown. The rude and wild sports of young men, and the early training them to arms, gave them a ferocity of character which, in these more civilized times, no longer exist; and if the age of chivalry is past, so also is the age of outrage and violence."

"No age," interrupted Edelfrida Griffiths seriously, "however rude or uncultivated, can sanction so great an outrage of every moral virtue, as the deed of vengeance to which I allude. The insatiable spirit of ambition led to the first tragic event in this extraordinary tale."

"If you are inclined, Sir, to peruse the manuscript," continued she, "it shall be laid before you in the library any morning you will name, and no one shall interrupt you."

Eagerly I availed myself of Miss Griffiths' offer. I told her, with permission, the following morning I would like to give the manuscript a reading. "For," I added, "my stay in Wales will

now be very short, having absented myself from London for a longer period than I had at first proposed."

On naming my intended departure, I found an expression of concern shaded the bright countenance of Miss Griffiths; for she remained for some minutes silent and abstracted: nor was it till Mrs. Powis addressed her, she was roused from her reverie.

Mrs. Powis had borne little share in the conversation. Her face was full of grief, and it seemed as if she had done violence to her inclination in dining at the Castle; an effort of kindness she had made to oblige her niece.

At ten o'clock I took leave; and returned with the worthy curate to the village. The healthful exercise of my ride to the Castle, the invigorating air impregnated with a thousand sweets, the enchanting scenery, but above all the engaging society of Miss Griffiths, seemed to have given me renovated existence;

and I awoke in the morning so much refreshed by sleep; that, after taking a hasty breakfast, I once more found myself at Gwayn Castle.

I imagine orders had been given to conduct me immediately to the library, for the man gave me no opportunity of enquiring for his lady, but, ushering me through a suite of apartments, threw the door open, and placing a chair beside a large table, which extended almost the length of the library, respectfully bowed, and said, "Mrs. Lloyd would wait upon me with the book his lady had left for me to her care."

"Is not Miss Griffiths then," cried I, in a tone of surprise and disappointment, "at home?"

"No, Sir, my Lady went out early this morning; and is not expected back before to-morrow evening."

I ought not to have been vexed and disappointed at this intelligence, as I certainly came to the Castle for the pur-

pose of perusing the manuscript, not to visit Miss Griffiths; yet I could hardly conceal my chagrin when Mrs. Lloyd entered the library, and bade me good morning.

The respectable old woman had a board with chocolate in one hand, and in the other she held the manuscript, which, with a look of important care, she laid before me.

“You will find quite a romance, Mr. Fortescue, in these papers. A dreadful tragedy is related. I question if Sir Roger Mortimer, or Earl Warren, could sleep in their beds, without being haunted by the spirits of the poor youths. But I will leave you Sir; and beg you will take a cup of chocolate.”

Mrs. Lloyd withdrew.

On opening the manuscript, I found it so much defaced by time, that many parts were entirely illegible. Numberless pages at the beginning were torn away, and rendered the opening of the legend so

unconnected, that it was only by the after thread of the story, it was possible to guess at the preceding events, which gave Earl Warren and Sir Roger Mortimer the possession of Holt and Gwayn Castles.

Subsequent events in my life have enabled me to present my readers with a perusal of the legend of

THE KNIGHT'S DAUGHTER.

* * * * *

* * No obstacle now remained to impede Sir Roger Mortimer's entire possession of the magnificent domain of Gwayn Castle. The sudden death of Emma ap Gryffydd Madoc, soon after she became his wife, and he had attained the height of his ambition, might have carried an awful and striking lesson home, not to his own bosom, but also to that of his partner in iniquity and fraud. But elated with the success of his enterprize, he looked

not beyond the enjoyment of the present hour, rich in all goodly possession, nor guessed how soon his felicity was to be blighted by domestic calamity, and that the rose of his house bloomed but to leave the most poignant thorns in his breast.

His only child, the young Elwyna, was designed by her father for the bride of Earl Warren, a wealthy nobleman, whose vast estates extended over an immense tract of the neighbouring country.

But Earl Warren was not formed to render the lovely Elwyna happy.

His character was dark, designing, subtle. His ambition was as boundless as his disposition was cruel, vindictive, and tyrannical. He had overcome every difficulty for the attainment of that wealth which he had acquired through a scene of bloodshed. A sullen melancholy ever sat on that brow, which no sunshine of surrounding joy could cheer, nor any festive merriment rob him for one hour of those appalling images

which continually haunted his gloomy imagination. Without any mental resource, he was ignorant, bigotted, and superstitious; for in those dark ages scholastic education had rarely visited the nobles of the remote countries; and their habits of life were as rude as the diversions which they followed. Earl Warren's manners were stern, yet at times meanly servile, for he could so form them either to excite awe by his arrogance and oppression, or he could by fawning servility demean himself by assumed condescension, when he had any favourite point to carry.

: Earl Warren's associates chiefly consisted of his vassals, for he could not endure subordination, nor submit to contradiction. His enjoyments mostly consisted in the coarse pleasures of the table; for at that period the feudal lord was generally as ignorant as his vassals; therefore their pursuits and amusements were the same. In the morning they

hunted the boar, and revelled in the evening ; and like some of our modern fox-hunters, whose race is not yet quite exploded, went intoxicated to bed, and rose at an early hour to again begin the insipid round of noise, mirth, and intemperance.

Fame had spoken loudly of the beauty of the Lady Elwyna, which, according to the poetry of a celebrated Welsh bard, was given in song, at the evening banquet, by a travelling minstrel at Holt Castle. The story ran thus,

“O fairer than the flowers adorning,

“The hawthorn in a summer morning ;

“While life remains I still will sing

“Thy praise, until the mountains ring.”

Earl Warren had never yet beheld the fair Elwyna Mortimer. It was true, Sir Roger had often promised that he should woo her ; but his own marriage with Emma Gryffydd ap Madoc, her sudden death, and Elwyna's secluded habits of life, had hitherto impeded his intentions ;

and the impatient curiosity of Earl Warren to behold this beauteous damsel still remained ungratified.

Elwyna, according to the custom of females at that remote period, frequently joined the chace. A youth, who in a dependant state dwelt in her father's Castle, and she regarded with an eye of partial interest, prevailed upon Elwyna to attend on a morning when a stag was to be sent forth, and the hunt was to be more than ordinarily splendid.

Soon after day-break, the bugles sounded merrily in the large court, filled with a goodly assemblage of persons. The yeomen were drest in Kendal green, with their bugles, hangers, and quarter stuffs. A dozen foresters led as many couple of fleet greyhounds; the hunters, pages, and esquires were in attendance; also the falconer made up the rear with his hawks. The minstrel also was there, and struck up a roundelay to this effect, in which he was joined in chorus :

" Waken lords and ladies gay,
 " On the mountain dawns the day,
 " All the jolly chace is here,
 " With hawk, and horse, and hunting spear;
 " Hounds are in their couples yelling,
 " Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling;
 " Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
 " Waken lords and ladies gay."

STUART.

Elwyna, attired in the habit of a silvan nymph, as was her lady attendant, mounted her milk white palfrey, which was handsomely caparisoned, and joined, at morning's roseate dawn, the rural throng.

Her young favourite was habited in bright green, edged with gold, and wore a bugle-horn attached to a baldrick of silk. Green feathers waved gracefully from his cap, and he might have been mistaken for Faunus, so rustic yet simply beautiful was his appearance.

With ardour and with spirit the chase begun. The stag rushed through the deep entangled thickets with impetuous speed, followed over bush and brake by

his merciless pursuers ; with fleet steps he rushed down an impending bank, and plunged into the rapid roaring Dee, which falls into the Ceiriog, a few miles beyond Gwayn Castle, and wanders at the foot of woody eminences, which slope to the margin of this romantic and magnificent wood. As the difficulty of pursuit increased, so was the spirit of the chase kept up. The hunters rushed forward, forded the river where it was shallow, and proceeded, unheeding of danger, through the shady dingles. Owen, so the youth was called, left not Elwyna's side ; but she, eager in pursuit, was unfortunately dismounted, by her garment catching in the stump of a shivered oak ; and unable to disentangle herself, from the impatience of her horse to follow the cry of the hounds which echoed through the woods, she was, notwithstanding Owen's aid, precipitated with force against the tree, and thrown with violence on the ground.

With gentle tenderness Owen raised

her, and hurrying to a little brilliant stream that wandered through the coppice, brought some of its refreshing water in his cap, sprinkled it on her face and hands, and restored the fainting Elwyna to her senses.

Just as she opened her eyes, with a look of beaming sweetness on her deliverer, a stranger who had not long joined the chase, approached the spot, and offered his assistance. He was mounted on a high mettled steed, which bore his proud rider with a spirit that seemed ready to crush those possessed of the hardihood to approach them. The stranger was followed by a troop of huntsmen, and having dismounted, with a look of haughty superiority, intended to abash the youth Owen, approached the lady, took her hand, and endeavoured to raise her.

With timid surprize Elwyna regarded the stranger, and in a faint accent, rejected his proffered assistance.

Earl Warren (for it was he) would not

be repulsed. He commanded his men to cut down boughs from the trees, to form a sort of litter, and in that manner to convey the lady to Holt Castle, several miles nearer the present spot than her father's mansion. Resistance was vain. She assured the noble lord her hurt was slight, and she was only stunned for a moment by the fall; no limbs indeed were broken, but when she attempted to rise, she was unable to stand, and staggered back, almost fainting in Owen's arms. He with spirit and firmness opposed Lord Warren's intention of conducting the Lady Elwyna to his Castle. The active part which he had taken, and the impatient anxiety displayed, highly excited the indignation of the noble lord; and his displeasure was strongly painted in the malignity and cunning of his subtle eyes, darting with scornful malice upon Owen. But Owen, though apparently of humble degree, had that shew of nobility in his

manner and deportment, that it spoke him no servile menial, but high souled, brave, and courteous. There was an in-born dignity in every look and gesture, that checked impertinent and offensive freedom.

"Whither, Sir Knight," cried Owen, "would you conduct the Lady Elwyna? If she is too much enfeebled by her accident to reach Gwayn Castle, surely some other resting place may be found more suitable than a stranger's mansion."

Elwyna started up in affright, and eagerly inquired whether they meant to carry her.

"To a place," replied Earl Warren, "of rest and safety. Bear the Lady Elwyna hence," continued he, as he lifted her, with one of his knights, on the sort of litter they had formed.

In vain did Owen oppose him; and, attended by Earl Warren and his train, they proceeded to Holt Castle.

The way led through a mountainous

and heathy tract of country, fertilized by little clear streams, and covered with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle feeding on the scanty herbage. *

They passed over a ruinous stone bridge, beneath which flows the rapid and impetuous Dee, joined by the river Alwen, a little above the town of Holt. †

They now reached the dreary fortress;

* Yale is a small mountainous tract overlooking Dyffryn Clwyd, and chiefly very high land, compared to the adjacent district; so much so, as to have occasioned the remark, that several rivulets issue from it, yet none run into it from any other district, owing to the elevated situation; the country is bleak, and the western part, including Ruabon hills, chiefly covered with heath. Those which extend into the west hundred afford excellent cover for grouse, and is a good sporting country. The more verdant hills are well stored with sheep, goats, and cattle. Several tracts, interspersed amidst these mountainous parts, are watered by cheering streams. Fertile meads abound in what is termed the valley of Yale.
—*Beauties of England and Wales.*

† Holt, formerly an ancient town, now an inconsiderable village. A bridge of ten arches thrown over the Dee separates Holt from the village of Farndon in Cheshire, once a military station.

built of dingy red stone *. It possessed neither the magnificent nor venerable stateliness of Gwayn Castle. The entrance was by a draw-bridge, thrown across a deep moat; heavy bastions rose at each corner of the building, and four circular ones faced the great court. The ponderous gateway was also surmounted by a tower, and fortified by a portcullis.

When Elwyna approached the heavy

* Holt castle is built of red-coloured sand stone. The fortress of pentangular shape, having a bastion tower at each angle, four circular, the one facing the river square. The entrance, by a draw-bridge thrown across a deep moat, communicating with a gateway over which was a square tower, strengthened by a portcullis. These were the more essential, because the ground not being extensive, and nearly level with the surface on which the tower stands, it must from these have derived its principal defence. The site was judiciously isolated on three sides, produced by quarrying stones for the building. On the fourth the Dee formed a natural barrier, into which a jet work advanced, as a quay for furnishing supplies for the garrison.

This fortress was of considerable note, and witnessed scenes of no common importance.—*Beauties of England and Wales.*

draw-bridge, and the warder raised the portcullis, she started up in a fright, and calling to Owen, intreated him to rescue her.

Owen, pale as death, and trembling like an aspen leaf, seemed at the moment to be buried in thought ; and his countenance displayed an expression of horror which marked some extraordinary struggle or terrible recollection passing in his mind.

The voice of Elwyna startled him. He gazed on her with a look of mournful pity, and then exclaimed in a low tone, "Heaven avert your being imprisoned here. This place, lady, is the abode of murder — of death ! Great heaven ! is it possible that again I look on the fell tyrant — that he can meet mine eye, and not be appalled with conscious guilt — not be stung to the soul by recollections that one might wonder did not drive him to madness or self-destruction."

"This fortress," cried Earl Warren, as

he rode by Elwyna's side, "is Holt Castle, all within its walls are prepared to do the Lady Elwyna homage."

"If," replied she, faintly, "you are lord of this domain, and report says true, that you have no wife, no sister, beyond this gate, I will not enter. It were unseemly in a maiden, thus alone, to shelter in a stranger's Castle. Receive then, my Lord of Warren, most gracious thanks for this your courtesy. Here we part, for in this Castle I cannot enter. Now Owen," turning to the youth, "give us safe conduct to my father's mansion, for he will much wonder at my absence."

Earl Warren, hastily advancing, half drew out his boselard *, and seized Owen by the arm. "At your peril move, young man," exclaimed he fiercely. "The Lady Elwyna tarries here this day. Sir Roger Mortimer shall have notice that his lovely daughter is my guest; and by the faith

* A sort of dagger.

of a true knight, I pledge myself to show all gallant courtesy to those who need it. It were an outrage to the rights of hospitality to send the lady hence."

"It is an outrage, my lord," replied the spirited Owen, "to detain the lady here in bondage."

"Insolent minion," retorted Earl Warren, "cease to dictate to one whose will is not to be disputed."

"Sound the bugle," he continued, "announce our approach, and let the Castle gates be thrown open."

Elwyna, weak and exhausted from the effect of her accident, and terrified at the rising contention, had fainted. Owen had not power to oppose Earl Warren; the resistance which he made proved of no avail, and the Lady Elwyna was borne in triumph to the Castle.

When she was restored to her senses, she found herself laid on a superb couch, with her companion Beatrice, and other female attendants, watching beside her;

a man to whom she was a stranger, supported her head ; it appeared that he had opened a vein, and was now endeavouring to make her swallow a cordial which he held to her lips. This person was the household physician.

Elwyna heaved a deep sigh, but soon returned into a state of insensibility. The physician was a man of skill and humanity, and the extreme beauty and suffering of his patient (for she was much hurt), awakened his compassion. He not only endeavoured to sooth her, but to prevail on her to be reconciled to a temporary confinement, assuring her, from the bruises which she had received from her fall, a removal in her present state was impossible. He ordered the immediate repose of bed, and pledged his word, when she was able to listen to him, that she should suffer no molestation or intrusion from Earl Warren. He further added, that her lady attendant should be accommodated in an adjoining apartment.

“Alas !” cried Elwyna mournfully, “there is no remedy for my hapless situation ; for there is no aid, no rescue at hand ; of necessity, therefore, I must submit to this cruel, this dishonorable captivity—I am very ill. To die is the least evil that can befall me.”

“O Sir,” continued she, with a piteous look of earnest supplication, “if you would indeed befriend me, send the youth Owen hither. Let a messenger be instantly dispatched to my father at Gwayn Castle, and he will command some of his esquires to conduct me home. If Owen is not a prisoner likewise, he will speed with the tidings of my disastrous fate ; but he, poor youth, dared not speak in the presence of the mighty tyrant of this magnificent prison.”

“Do, I pray you,” interrupted Beatrice, “let me seek for poor Owen. The Lady Elwyna will die, if she is kept in this frightful old Castle ; and I am sure I shall die also, very soon, if I have not my

liberty. To be so intrapped is past all belief, without some vile trickery of Earl Warren's. I should not wonder if he was a sorcerer, for we were spirited here as if by enchantment."

"Damsel, you will disturb your lady," said the physician, "if you so idly prate. We will lead her to her chamber; and then if the youth for whom she asks should still be here, if my Lord of Warren gives approval, he shall quickly be dispatched on your embassy to Gwayn Castle.

"He approve!" exclaimed Elwyna, in a tone of despair; "No, no! Earl Warren rather would annihilate Owen. Could his look, his voice have crushed him, he had not lived—perhaps he does not—what will not a tyrant do; will not he trample on every law, human and divine, to compass his desires, to indulge his boundless wishes? If, Sir, you would be my friend, it must be in secret. To

oppose my Lord of Warren is, indeed, to place you in his iron power."

Elwyna, fatigued and overcome by the attempt which she had made to interest the domestic physician in her favour, sunk back lifeless on the couch. While she remained in a state of insensibility, he had her removed to the chamber which was prepared for her, and put to bed ; and having administered a quieting draught, she sunk into a profound repose. The physician desired Beatrice to watch beside her lady, and then went to Earl Warren, to communicate the state of the Lady Elwyna, and the conversation that had passed between them.

Earl Warren, on hearing the report of his physician, immediately dispatched a messenger to Gwayn Castle with the intelligence to Sir Roger Mortimer, that his daughter was detained his guest, by a fall from her horse, and owing to the hurts which she had received, he had her con-

veyed to Holt Castle, as the nearest resting place. He requested Sir Roger to come thither with all speed, assuring him the Lady Elwyna was under safe and honourable protection. Owen, in the meantime, finding that he could afford no aid to the unfortunate Elwyna, hurried off to Gwayn Castle, which he reached before the sportsmen had returned from the chace.

It was rarely that he intruded himself into the presence of the haughty Sir Roger Mortimer; but on an occasion so important as the present, he did not hesitate to enter without ceremony or announcement. The hurry of Owen's step, as he advanced to the platform, where Sir Roger was witnessing a game at quoits, the deep flush of crimson that spread over his cheek, the indignation that sparkled in his eyes, was regarded with speechless astonishment by Sir Roger.

"Your pardon," said Owen, in a quick yet faltering accent, "for this intru-

sion. But the Lady Elwyna, your daughter ——”

“What of my daughter?” demanded he, in a voice of haughtiness, yet alarm.—
“Why returns she not from the chace? I heard, even now, the bugle sounded. What evil has betided her. She is fleet, and skilled in horsemanship; and I should besore vexed, if the Lady Elwyna’s reputation as a huntress, by any adverse accident, should be foiled.”

“Rather,” interrupted Owen, as the colour again spread over his face, with evident displeasure and disgust at so unfeeling a speech, “ought Sir Roger Mortimer to rejoice a life so precious as the Lady Elwyna’s is preserved, yet while congratulations may be due that she is rescued from the peril of the chace, I must express my sympathy, that she is now a captive in Earl Warren’s Castle.”

“To be the bearer of this news,” he added, “I have intruded on your presence, and with impatience wait the issue of your command to shew my

prowess in your daughter's rescue ; for surely Holt Castle is no place of refuge for the Lady Elwyna."

"Of that we will think anon," replied Sir Roger. "Earl Warren is my friend. He is noble, rich, powerful, of fair reputation. If, then, it appears that in the true and gallant spirit of knighthood he has rescued my daughter in the hour of danger, and fulfilled all the rights of hospitable entertainment, thanks were but a poor acknowledgment for Earl Warren's gracious courtesy.

"Should the Lady Elwyna," added he, with a scornful smile, "need a champion, we will chuse us one less basely born than the valorous Owen."

"True, Sir," he replied, with modest dignity, "I boast not that shew of nobility that high lineage as yourself ; but within me glows no ignoble passion ; nor do I deem myself unworthy to be the champion of your fair daughter, should she need one ; for, as surely as she may, I

shall not scruple to challenge even my Lord of Warren.”*

“Peace, young man,” cried Sir Roger Mortimer, in a voice of thunder, “ere my displeasure dismiss you from the Castle. It would seem that you have been here too long, and do usurp and presume upon the indulgence shown you. Retire, and hold no longer parley.”

“Say first that you will look to the condition of the Lady Elwyna. She has a keeper whose oppressive tyranny would make even the less feeble tremble.”

“You speak ambiguously, young man. It were best withdraw, and learn to know yourself; nor, in your humble walk of life, boldly aspire to a rank that ill becomes you.”

* The people of this nation, even from the highest to the lowest, have been endowed by nature with a boldness, and frank open manner of addressing and answering, even in the presence of a prince or chieftain, on every occasion. Such as we see in the Romans (Italians), and Franks; but not in the English, Saxon, or Germans.—*Brand's Popular Antiquities.*

Sir Roger's eye met Owen's: it was a fearful glance, and the haughty Knight's shrunk beneath the commanding firmness of his steady look, which bore a calm and dignified expression that quite disarmed him. He essayed to speak in vain; and with faltering voice and agitated frame he entered the great hall, where the table was spread for the banquet, as he waved his hand with an air of authority to Owen to quit his presence.

Scarcely had Owen withdrawn, when a courier was announced bearing a letter from Earl Warren. "Howel, Owen, Vaughan," said Sir Roger Mortimer, addressing his Esquires, "we must away at early dawn to Holt Castle, where my daughter, from an untoward accident, is detained. She is shy and timid, and will feel abashed to tarry longer than is needful for her health, even in the goodly company of my Lord of Warren.

"But Elwyna is beauteous, gentle, win-

ning ; and if she should be touched by all his gracious courtesies, then may she change her state of singleness to that of holy wedlock.

“ Look to it,” he continued, in a commanding voice, “ that the youth Owen goes not with us on the morrow. He is too bold of late. He would be my daughter’s suitor, and doth assume a freedom and companionship that may ensnare Elwyna, if I suffer his wily arts to gain upon her.”

The evening repast remained untouched by Sir Roger Mortimer, and the merry harp, which sounded in the hall, seemed rather to disturb than sooth his spirits. More than once during the banquet he started from his seat, as his eyes wandered round the table in anxious search, it would seem, of some particular object.

Sir Walter Vaughan, who was seated on Sir Roger’s right hand, remarked the haggard expression of his countenance,

and at length he ventured to inquire first if he were ill, or if he missed any person he was looking for at the table.

“My daughter, the Lady Elwyna,” he said, with assumed composure, “does not grace the feast ; and that strain of merriment appears unfitting, while she is absent. We will retire.”

With hasty steps he left the table, and desired to be alone.

When he had withdrawn, some wonder was expressed that Sir Roger deferred going until the morning to his fair daughter. But the Knight purposely delayed, to give Earl Warren leisure to win the favour of Elwyna, for no event was more desired by him than that Earl Warren should become her suitor. When Sir Roger Mortimer retired to his chamber, it was not to taste repose. He was haunted by images the most fearful: his wandering imagination presented, in the young Owen, a vision that seemed to have embodied itself in his person.

Yet it could not be : the grave yielded not up its dead — fancy is ever delusive, and a self-created image had thus frightfully haunted and disturbed him.

After pacing his chamber above an hour, he threw himself on his couch, and fell into an uneasy slumber ; for still Owen with undaunted brow and penetrating eye stood before him. Though he was clad in a simple tunic, there notwithstanding was in his air that of a valiant warrior — a mighty chieftain to whose portrait he bore a striking resemblance—and which until the former day had never struck him. In truth, Owen would still have passed unheeded, so insignificant was his station in the Castle, had not Sir Roger and he accidentally been confronted with each other. Then it was, that the loftiness of his carriage, the grandeur of his brow, open but commanding, the lightning of his eye, as it glanced upon him, the scornful smile that played upon his lips, seemed to shrink him into tremb-

ling cowardliness; his dark glossy ringlets, as he stood cap in hand fell gracefully to his shoulder; and even in his simple guise, the stately dignity of his demeanour might have been mistaken for the warrior he so wonderfully resembled. He had been painted with his head uncovered, his helmet was off, and he stood leaning on his sword in a posture of thoughtfulness.

Thus in perturbed slumber passed the night with Sir Roger Mortimer. Owen, on being dismissed his presence, overwhelmed with grief and indignation, retired to a turretted chamber which he occupied in a remote part of the Castle. Full of the vigour of youth, active, aspiring, impetuous, he was not to be intimidated by the threats of Sir Roger Mortimer. Deeply enamoured of Elwyna, mourning her captivity, he was resolved to use no means untried to rescue her from Earl Warren. It required, however, some forethought and considera-

tion, how to effect a scheme so replete with peril; for it was an impregnable fortress.

Terrible recollections accompanied the idea of that place, and only the rescue of the Lady Elwyna could render it possible for him to have again looked upon a spot that awakened horror the most appalling. But what will not love essay? Bred from childhood beneath the same roof with Elwyna, though in the humble guise of a minstrel boy, she had regarded him with partial affection. They had shared the same pastimes, and Owen excelled in those sports that could not fail to increase and win a lady's favour, in an age when it was customary for females not merely to witness, but to even partake in the rural sports of their times. Owen also possessed the happy faculty of gaining the esteem of all Sir Roger's household, one or two excepted, who looked on him with an eye of malignity and suspicion.

But the priest, the bard, the faloner, nay even the jester, loved Owen. He was naturally skilled in music and poetry, he was an excellent hawker, adventurous, and expert in the chace. He was skilled in arms and archery, and, above all, (a rare instance at that period), he possessed a fine taste for literature. Father Alselmo had been educated in a Benedictine convent, and was a man of learning and eloquence ; he had encouraged Owen's taste, and taught him the dead languages.

The despondence which at times hung over Owen, (for in his future prospects hope seemed to leave no anchor to rest on), he often wished that he had been trained to arms. His spirit was bold and enterprizing, and his soul rose with enthusiasm, as he read of the heroic deeds of his countrymen. He would like to have trod in the same field with the noble Caractacus ; he would like to have resembled in ardour and intrepidity an Alfred the Great, so aspiring was his spirit. He longed to burst the fetters of

menial slavery; and but for Elwyna, he would not so long have endured the thralldom of Gwayn Castle. But the thralldom was sweet while he could only look at her, listen to the soft and soothing accents of her melodious voice, attend her in her walks, play to her on the harp, accompany her in the chace—all made up such a sum of bliss, he desired no other life but those hours of pure enjoyment. But when they were fled, the natural loftiness of his spirit burst forth, and chid the easy indulgence in which he spent his days. The clang of arms seemed to sound in his ear, and bid him rush on to battle. In the heroes of his country who had crowned themselves with victory and with laurels, his heart panted to join; he wished to become a warrior, and a conqueror; he hoped the time would yet arrive when his love would be so far subdued, that he should acquire the resolution to enlist himself beneath those banners which might lead to future glory.

He lost no opportunity of encouraging his natural fondness for military exercises, which, at times, he was enabled to indulge, by observing the manœuvres of the knights he saw at Gwayn Castle. Some of them had been in the crusades, and joined frequently in tournaments. Owen delighted in these achievements, and Sir Gilbert Herbert, who had distinguished the young Owen with partiality and interest, and instructed him in some of those dexterous and graceful manœuvres, in which he was so renowned and skilled. Thus did Owen, who had never strayed beyond his native hills, excel in the accomplishments of a warrior and a gentleman.*

* The mere acquirement of arms, though essentially requisite, was not sufficient of itself to form an accomplished knight in times of chivalry. It was necessary for him to be endowed with beauty, as well as strength and agility of body. He ought to be skilled in music, and dancing gracefully, to run with swiftness, to excel in wrestling, to ride well, to perform every part befitting his situation. To these were to



WHEN the Lady Elwyna awoke from the deep repose into which the soporific draught had lulled her, she found herself in a spacious chamber, fitted up in the most antique style of gloomy grandeur. The gigantic figures of warriors crowding the tapestry with which the apartment was hung, with their drawn sabres, trampling one another to death as they rode over the dying and the slain, filled her with horror. The bed was composed of crimson velvet, with a high canopied tester, and hangings of the same. She endeavoured to look from the window on the landscape beneath, but they were placed so high, and richly emblazoned with armorial devices, as not merely to obscure the light, but throw every surrounding object into

be added, urbanity of manners, strict adherence to the truth, and invincible courage. Hunting and hawking skilfully were acquirements he was obliged to possess, and which were taught him as soon as he was able to endure the fatigue that were required.—*Brand's Popular Antiquities.*

deep shadow, and give a dreary melancholy to the prison in which she was lodged.

Vain was Elwyna's endeavour to open the casement, for it was strongly secured with iron bars. The furniture corresponded with the bed, and consisted of a few stools, and a couch covered with velvet, supported with heavy carved work, superbly gilded. The floor was of dark oak ; and above the wide fire place, the mantle piece of exquisite parian marble, presented arms and devices in the finest sculpture.

Elwyna gazed in hopeless despondence on all around her. She saw no means of escape from her proud oppressor, nor any person within the walls of this gloomy fortress likely to aid her escape.

Beatrice, her lonely attendant, seemed to have deserted, and left her to her forlorn condition ; for in vain she knocked and called aloud. No answer was returned to her voice, except a feeble echo.

On raising the arras in despair, she

discovered a door; anxious to find whither it led, and if through it she could get away, with fearful haste she lifted the latch, and the next moment found herself in a chamber similar to the one which she occupied; but of smaller size. With trembling steps, she approached the bed, on which, to her unspeakable joy, she beheld Beatrice extended in a profound sleep. She flew to her in transport, and folded her in her arms. Beatrice instantly awoke—with respectful tenderness returned the Lady Elwyna's affectionate salute, and then inquiring with anxiety after her health, informed her “that one of the young damsels of the Castle had shewn her into the chamber she now occupied, and told her there she was to remain during the night, for the domestic physician had desired her Lady might not be disturbed. Soon after the damsel left me,” continued Beatrice, “I was visited by the priest. He wished to have administered comfort and advice to the sick lady,

he said, and took my promise that I would conduct you to matins in the chapel, if you were well enough ; if not, he would come in the morning to give you his benediction. I, however, was very weary, and lay down in my garments ; I fell asleep, and am most pleasantly awakened by seeing you, my dear Lady. "How, in a moment, were Elwyna's woes lightened by this happy meeting with her favourite Beatrice!

Anxiously did they both search for some other door to lead them to the corridor, but the one they found only conducted into an adjoining apartment, so ruinous, dark, and desolate, they were obliged to return to Elwyna's chamber, and await the coming of some of the young maidens in attendance.

The deep and sullen tones of the clock, as its tones reverberated along the fortifications, proclaimed it was still but early day. The terror and anxiety of Elwyna's mind seemed to have given supernatural

strength to her bruised and enfeebled body, such was the present energy and alacrity which she possessed.

She had risen from bed to effect, if possible, her escape, and felt that she would rather sacrifice her life in the attempt than remain Earl Warren's prisoner.

Soon after the clock had sounded, the physician and Father Hubert requested admittance, having been preceded by two young females above the ordinary degree of domestics, who were sent to attend the pleasure of the Lady Elwyna Mortimer.

The physician looked surprised to find her up and attired so early; she assured him that she was well; at which he smiled with incredulity; but having ordered her some proper and necessary refreshment, he left her to the care of the young maidens, and the company of the holy priest.

After he had prayed beside her, and

given his benediction, he addressed Elwyna by saying, " My Lord of Warren greets the Lady Elwyna cordially, and would fain she graced his board at the evening banquet with your presence." " But," continued he, turning to Beatrice and the damsels, " retire a while, for the daughter would confess herself; and it is meet she should, when she will find comfort." Beatrice and the young women withdrew.

There was not that look of pious meekness in the Father to console affliction, nor that placid sanctity to inspire respect. His brow was stern, his eyes were small and subtle. His tall athletic figure, though bent with years, was corpulent—his colour high and streaky, such as would say, that he rather lived in feasting than in fasting. When he spoke, it was with softness; for in a suppressed tone he tried to stifle his harsh discordant voice, and with servile fawning he coaxed and soothed Elwyna.

"A page," said he, "will conduct you to the hall this evening, where my Lord of Warren, his Knights and Squires, will be assembled, with dancing, minstrelsy, and song, for your entertainment."

"Therefore, no place," she exclaimed with haughty indignation, "for the Lady Elwyna."

"Say," she continued, "that when my Lord of Warren forgets that respect to female singleness, he must be told it is an affront to ask my presence at a banquet where himself and knights alone preside. I am his prisoner, it is true. Let then this chamber be my prison house, for no further shall he drag me. If here I am compelled to live, here also will I die."

"Lady, be prevailed on," said the priest in a persuasive tone. "Earl Warren is noble, brave, and courteous; consider well ere you so haughtily refuse his invitation. Many are the hours to sunset; you will not surely perversely decline his proffered hospitality."

"I go not to the banquet," interrupted Elwyna in a decided tone. "Deceive not, then, Earl Warren. My freedom I demand. His title is dishonoured by so cowardly an action as that of detaining a lady captive against all law, and meanly fawn to one who holds him in abhorrence."

While thus parleying, a loud blast of the bugle sounded through the court. Elwyna stood awed and silent by the shrill sound.

Shortly after a page, followed by a knight, desired admittance. With courteous salutation the knight addressed her.

"Your father, Lady, Sir Roger Mortimer, approaches, he would see you."

Elwyna shrunk on the couch in trembling expectation. Father Hubert retired.

The door was thrown open of the apartment, and the knight advanced with an assumed smile of complacent kindness, which the stern expression of his brow belied.

Elwyna fell in prostrate supplication at his feet. In a feeble accent, with uplifted hands, she exclaimed, "My father! — Oh, hour of joy! — my prayer is heard — you come to rescue and to save me."

"Of that we will speak anon."

He glanced his eye around on those who stood in waiting.

The knight penetrated his meaning, and, guessing that he wished to be alone with his daughter, silently withdrew, as did the page.

Sir Roger Mortimer seated himself beside Elwyna ; she took his passive hand, which she bedewed with tears, and hung over him with fond endearments.

Her father spoke not ; but bore impatiently her caresses. He seemed inclined to chide, and strove to endure her fondlings, the better to plead Earl Warren's cause.

"When go we hence, my father?" said she, in a soft and supplicating tone.

"To depart thus soon", replied the knight, "would be unmannerly. My friend of Warren has prepared a sumptuous banquet for this evening, and he desires our presence.

"You will attire yourself, Elwyna," he continued. "Your maidens will attend in rich array, in honour of the favour done you."

"O ask me not, my father," cried she, in a coaxing voice; "I cannot, will not, go."

"Wherefore Elwyna? My presence is your sanction. Away with childish bashfulness; it ill becomes the daughter of a Mortimer. You are of high degree—and of high degree must be your company. Debase not then yourself with those of menial lineage."

Elwyna blushed, looked abashed, and replied not.

"Reflect," continued her father, "on the discourse I now have held; and when the evening summons to the hall is

given, I expect you will appear with that complacent look that shews Earl Warren's suit is not rejected."

"His suit?" cried Elwyna, with surprise. "To me Earl Warren has made no proffer."

"Your shy reserve, your behaviour so ungracious, is the cause then. Men, like Lord Warren, are not used to fawn and cringe to the whining folly of a silly maiden. Shew you are the daughter of a Mortimer, as great in soul as well as name—for on my faith, as surely as you scorn those honours to which you may shortly be exalted, a place of banishment shall be found for that aspiring youth, who too long has been fostered in my Castle; and you, Elwyna, have unwittingly spoiled by your ill-judged indulgence."

The colour faded from Elwyna's cheek, and she would have replied to her father, but utterance seemed to be denied her.

Sir Roger cast on her a look of reproof, and left the apartment.

When Elwyna was again alone, the wretchedness of her destiny was almost beyond what she was able to endure. Thus, to be cast off by her father; deprived of all consolation and support, from that source whence she alone depended for comfort and protection.

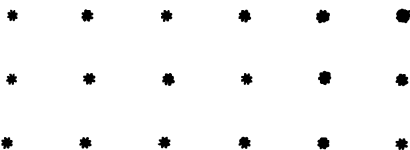
Of Owen she could not think, except with sorrow and alarm. She foresaw the dangers by which he was surrounded, when a look or word of tenderness from her would lead him to banishment, perhaps to death. The invincible firmness of her father, in whose bosom no spark of tenderness had ever gleamed except towards herself, made her tremble for the fate of her lover; for to what rigour and cruelty might not his conduct be actuated, having already menaced her with the banishment of Owen, if she did not listen to Earl Warren's suit.

"Poor youth!" exclaimed she men-

tally "Those virtues which adorn thee, which excite esteem, which inspire admiration, and exalt thee far above thy fellows, are to prove thy destruction, if but one smile of tenderness proclaims how fondly thou art loved by the wretched Elwyna."

"Oh could we" continued she to herself, "retire to some sequestered spot, far from the pageantry of the great, the proud, the selfish, and there dwell together in that sweet elysium which kindred minds alone can taste, then would the humblest dwelling prove a terrestrial paradise; and with the simple occupations of a pastoral life, we would view with contempt that imposing grandeur which, though it allures the eye, yet with the unambitious makes no lasting impression."

The kind attention of Beatrice soothed Elwyna. She prevailed on her to take some refreshment, and happily she enjoyed a few hours of refreshing sleep.



The banquet was spread in a spacious hall, the gloomy aspect of which seemed not to correspond with the scene of mirth and festivity intended to prevail. It was furnished with a *dais* or elevated upper end, with a long table fixed in the centre, at which sat the superior guests, and at another table were placed the inferior partakers of the feast. The lofty roof was crossed with beams, and the walls rudely adorned with various implements of war, and the spoils of the chace. The floor consisted of tessellated pavement, and the wide chimney-piece was magnificently cut in stone, richly emblazoned. •

Elwyna's father led her into the hall, and as he cast his eyes upon the dress in

which she had attired herself, he looked displeased it was not more costly.

She wore a watchet-colored tunic over a rocket of white lawn, and confined by a girdle clasped with precious stones. The full sleeves, neatly plaited, were fringed with silver. Her fair redundant tresses fell in graceful ringlets on her finely turned shoulders, partially shading her snowy and swan-like neck. Her head was covered with a caul of silver net, encircled with a garland of violets mixed with white roses.

Elwyna, in thus attiring herself, had not exactly obeyed her father. She had chosen this habit out of several others that had been brought her, because it was the least costly, and the most simple ; she thought there was no cause to array herself in a gala suit when her mind was so little attuned to festivity. Had she, however, studied to look beautiful, she could not possibly have set off her charms to greater advantage. The

chaste and delicate blue gave a captivating softness to her person, a lightness to her air, that was tender and lovely. Jewels might have added a more dazzling lustre to her person, have excited fuller admiration ; but the exterior appeared to be an emblem of the mind of a beautiful young female, endowed with all the feminine softness of her sex, retiring from the public gaze of admiration, like the modest violets with which she was adorned. To a knight of noble mien, Sir Roger Mortimer resigned his fair daughter, on his request to lead her to the hall. With timid air she gave her hand, proceeded by a page.

The ponderous doors were thrown open, and at the entrance stood Earl Warren surrounded by his knights and esquires to receive the Lady Elwyna Mortimer.

His carriage was lofty, and his brow commanding. His black thick eyebrows, almost knit together, gave a fierce ex-

pression to his large dark eyes, as they glared upon Elwyna, who shrunk with terror from him. A raven plume waved in his cap, which he had taken off to do her homage.—“The Lady Elwyna,” cried he, in a harsh and dissonant voice, “does honor to the banquet by her presence.”

He would have taken her hand, but she recoiled from his touch with involuntary horror.

Earl Warren frowned.

“Elwyna,” said her father, with stern rebuke, “give your hand to my Lord of Warren.”

Reluctantly she did so, and he led her to the upper end of the table, where he took his seat, placing Elwyna on his right side, and her father on his left.

The table being filled with the company, the hawks were placed with long silver chains upon perches over their heads, and their hounds rested at their feet on the pavement beneath. The senes-

chal conducted the entertainment. The minstrels, who were placed in an opposite gallery, struck up during the repast in sublime minstrelsy, the valorous acts of the Welch hero, afterwards changing the music to a genial air, which was accompanied in song by one of the bards setting forth the pleasures of the chase.

The golden cup being presented, the steward of the household gave the toast, the health of Earl Warren ; which, after being drank, was followed by that of the Lady Elwyna Mortimer. Each knight as he put the hippocrass to his lips did homage to the fair Elwyna. Again a minstrel touched the harp ; but the measure was now altered from the heroic to a soft and tender air, accompanied by a voice, though full and powerful, of the most tuneful melody. The bard sang an Ode to Harmony, *Garhoffed Gwyr Harlech*, which in the translation ran thus :

ODE TO HARMONY.

1.

Harmony from Heav'n descended,
Soaring first where chaos ended,
And through time and space extended,
Heaven's first decree,
Pleasure's exultation,
Sorrow's consolation,
Thou'rt the glow
That Poets know
From rich imagination.
The very soul itself refining,
And all that's great and good combining,
God, and man, and angels joining,
Hail thee Harmony.

2.

Music breathes the lover's story,
Wakes in war the soldier's glory,
Leads in peace the dance before ye,
Many maidens gay !
Social friends endearing,
Lonely hermits cheering,
Winter's gloom
And Summer's bloom
With richest rapture peering :
O spirit, that to man befriending
Past the power of thoughts extending,
Countless worlds in order blending
Heavenly Harmony.

DEVASTON.

Every eye was directed towards the gallery. But the minstrel's face was so closely shaded by a hood he wore, and his figure enveloped in his full grey habit, as he bent over the harp, no further notice was taken after the first enquiry whence he came, as it appeared that he was only a poor travelling minstrel who had begged a night's shelter.

But there was one being in this large assemblage of persons, who in mute wonder listened to his strains. Oh! that voice, so rich in melody, so sweetly soothing to her heart, no other in the universe could prove its equal to the charmed senses of Elwyna. She scarcely seemed to breathe. She was overwhelmed with the emotion which the strain had excited; yet one little unguarded exclamation of surprize would betray the precious secret that, by some stratagem Owen had gained admittance within the Castle, so effectually disguised that only his voice had discovered him to

Elwyna, for unnumbered years appeared to be added to his age in the general expression and disguise which he had assumed.

Detection rarely occurs where suspicion is not awakened; and Owen happily escaped undiscovered either by Earl Warren or Sir Roger Mortimer.

During the repast, Earl Warren directed his attention and discourse to the Lady Elwyna. She heard him in silence, and received his courtesies with downcast eyes, and abashed demeanour. The song of the minstrel yet thrilled in her ears; and though he no longer occupied a seat in the gallery, the melody of his song sunk deep into her heart; she was absorbed in thought, and neither heard nor saw any of the persons by whom she was surrounded.

"Rouse ye, Elwyna," said her father, casting on her a look of displeasure. "My Lord of Warren would converse with and amuse you—that air of absence and cold regard, ill requites the means essayed to please you."

"Lady," interrupted Earl Warren, at the same time taking her reluctant hand, "say but what you wish, whether with dancing, song, or tilting, you would chuse to be diverted, and on the instant you shall be entertained."

"I wish not—I cannot be entertained, for I am ill at ease; and if, my Lord of Warren, you will excuse my longer presence here, I would withdraw to that retirement best suited to my health and spirits."

"Lady you are free to go," exclaimed Earl Warren with haughty indignation, "I am no tyrant; but thus to set at nought all my proffered entertainment, and with a scorn almost unmanerly to repay my gracious courtesies, excites the question, why the fair Elwyna thus rejects Earl Warren's favors."

"Because they are displeasing," she returned, with all the simplicity of truth.

"By my faith," cried he with a scornful laugh, "that at least is honest" —

springing at the same moment from his seat, trembling and pale with passion.

Elwyna trembled also, but it was with fear. Her father's angry brow, and the quick lightning of his flaming eye, appalled her—true he spoke not, but his look denounced and threatened vengeance. Lord Warren saw it likewise, and apprehensive that he should lose Elwyna, he caught her father's arm, and, with that fawning smile hypocrisy so well can wear, exclaimed with gentle supplication, "Chide not your fair daughter; she is young and guileless. Let her have her way."

"Lady retire," turning to the sinking Elywna, "you are no captive here, though you lead into captivity. You are free to go, and to obey you is our greatest pleasure."

The female attendants came round her. She took the arm of Beatrice, and, conducted by a page, Elwyna sought seclusion in her chamber, and in discoursing with her faithful Beatrice found

some relief and comfort. The night was past in wakefulness and weeping.

Earl Warren, fearful of weakening his cause, and skilled in every artifice, would not allow the knight to molest his daughter, and the remainder of the evening was spent in carousing.

Various sports were devised by Lord Warren for the amusement of Elwyna. It was his intention to detain her at the Castle until he had obtained her father's leave to woo her, using, in the meantime, every stratagem to ensnare her.

At noon, on the May day, he proposed that four knights should run four courses at the ring for the entertainment of his fair guest, when Elwyna was commanded by her father to give her presence at the tilt.

Earl Warren intended being one of the candidates. The knight who obtained the victory was to lay at Elwyna's feet a chaplet which was suspended from a pole beside the ring. Confident of his own

prowess, he feared not being foiled. Three other knights, beside himself, skilled in the lance, were selected for the tilt, each of them to wear a mask.

A herald prepared the performance.

A rope was stretched across the square, and supported by long staves driven into the ground at one end. A rope, some yards in height, was erected, from whence was suspended a small circle of brass; two springs were fixed to the top of the ring, which, being pressed together, were driven into a socket, and retained there, by the springs being so constructed as to yield when the point of the lance was thrust through the ring, and allow it to be drawn out, without injuring the socket, or breaking the spear.*

The slight and youthful figure of one of the knights would have rendered his prowess in tilting doubtful, had not the

* The game described in Strutt's Sports and Pastimes.

brilliant part which he bore in a course given the promise of decided victory. His lofty and majestic air, easy and graceful actions, excited the admiration of the spectators, and the jealousy of his opponents. Elwyna beheld him with watchful and intense interest. She scarcely seemed to breathe, as she impatiently waited the decision of the contest, and wondered how it could be, that this unknown knight had caused such anxiety in her bosom for his conquest.

On the knight's vest was curiously wrought the device of a dog, and encircled round the animal were the words, "*Faithful to the end.*"

Earl Warren, with infinite skill and dexterity, struck at the ring, and bore it from the socket; but the knight who declared himself *faithful to the end*, having struck at the ring once, and carried it away twice, had the victory unanimously decreed to him.

Earl Warren was outrageous thus to be

foiled by a mere stripling, for such the figure of the knight proclaimed him, shewing a proud triumph over his foe the haughty spirit of Lord Warren ill could brook. He thirsted for revenge, and that most deadly. In single combat, he believed his weighty arm would lay him low, and fain would he have challenged him to the strife, but he had no plea to offer. The victory had been fairly won, and according to the rules laid down, the garland was adjudged to the knight who was *faithful to the end*, to be by him presented to the Lady Elwyna, queen of the day.

The garland, which was formed of precious stones, of right belonged to Earl Warren, for it was an heir-loom.

The knight approached to take the glittering gems. Earl Warren stood beside the chaplet, and when the knight would have displaced it, in a posture of stern defiance, and with arm extended, he warded off the knight, while he held

up the brilliant garland, and with rude rebuke seemed disposed to crush him to the ground.

Undismayed, bold, intrepid as himself, the victorious knight gazed on the glittering gems, intended to encircle the fair Elwyna's brow; and as he gazed again intently on the wreath, which, in vain, he tried to seize, he suddenly, with quick and hurried steps, turned to Elwyna, to whom the trophy of his victory ought to have been given. With graceful homage he threw himself before her; and tearing off the balderic on which his crest was wove, he laid it at her feet, and instantly disappeared.

Elwyna trembling, confused, surprised, stooped to reach it, and read the soothing motto — *faithful to the end*.

It was, then, as she guessed, Owen proved the victor. The secret assurance that in every scene of peril and oppression he was near, and *faithful to the end*, gave her new support and confidence. While

thus disguised, in secret he watched over her in every varied character which at pleasure and convenience he assumed, rendered detection almost impossible.

Earl Warren now stepped forth and looked around. His adversary was gone, and the tilt having some time ended, Elwyna rose to depart, when Lord Warren quickly approached, and on bended knee placed the sparkling garland on her brow.

“ Lady, accept this offering,” he said, with ill assumed humiliation, “ and allow a gallant knight thus to crown your brow with gems, in truth less radiant than those starry eyes, but which I proffer as a token of the love I bear you.”

Elwyna’s father’s eye was fixed upon her ; she dared not refuse to wear the glittering chaplet, and as Earl Warren placed it on her head, she bowed in haughty silence.

On her arm there hung the baldric which the knight had thrown her. Earl

Warren saw the precious girdle, and with eagle eye he read the motto *faithful to the end*. "On my soul," cried he with frantic rage, "that is boldly said. — Lady, you have cognizance of this same valiant knight, who with bold presumption has dared to enter the lists with these our nobles, and make, unasked, one in our pastimes."

"Order the Castle gates," continued he with loud authority, and glancing eagerly around, "on this instant to be closed. None passes hence to-night; I fain would learn who is this faithful knight, for Earl Warren is not to be foiled by a lady's minion, a strippling of a boy, without revenge."

All love's courtesies now were ended. Hatred and vengeance only cry aloud. With wary force, Earl Warren tore the baldric from Elwyna's arm, and with fiend-like fury trampled it beneath his foot, shaking with violence, the ground on which he stood.

Elwyna, struck with horror and affright, shrieked aloud, and was borne half dead from the square into the Castle.

Sir Roger Mortimer, confounded and surprised, remained with Earl Warren for an explanation of conduct so extraordinary.

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*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*

Elwyna had not long retired to her apartment, when she was visited by her father.

“Whence comes it, Elwyna,” he said, with more than usual sternness, “this unbecoming conduct, this trifling with my Lord of Warren, this bold rejection of all proffered kindnesses. But it is well; some means less pleasant shall be tried; for on my soul, this whining weakness in a love sick maiden must be

cured by harsher measures than you guess ; if with the new awakened day I see that saddened brow, and smiles of cheerfulness beam not upon Earl Warren. Look to it child, and see that you obey me."

"Good Sir," interrupted Beatrice, "chide not so sorely my poor lady. She will be broken hearted ; for, gracious Sir, your displeasure sits heavily upon her."

"Let her obey me then" he said, relaxing a little, "and all my anger shall be turned to looks and words of tenderness."

Elwyna with up raised hands, and eyes, brim full of tears in humble supplication caught her father's mantle, and with piteous looks intreated his benediction.

"A rebellious child deserves it not," exclaimed he, wrathfully, starting from her.

"Call me not so, dearest father," said Elwyna, in trembling humility, "Use not so harsh a name ; never before did I dispute your will ; but on wings of love

and duty I have flown to obey your every wish."

"In good sooth, my will and wishes until now, you have not known. Each rural pastime you have shunned; withdrawn yourself from our courtly company, and with that boy Owen, have been content to listen to the amorous tinkling of his harp."

Elwyna dared not speak, dared not look up, and hung her head in guilty condemnation. Truly had said her father, she had indeed of late too fondly listened to the tender strains of Owen's harp, to the persuasive accents which he uttered; and at every favored minute sought in his society those hours of blissful converse which kindred minds alone know how to taste.

With pitying eye Beatrice beheld her lady. She raised her drooping form, and gently laid her on a couch.

"Retire ye," cried Sir Roger in a softened voice, "to your pillow," as he

gazed upon her wan cheek. "Beatrice, attend your lady; and report to me on the morrow that she repents her disobedience, and is ready to fulfill my wishes."

He withdrew.

Elwyna threw herself into the arms of Beatrice, and weeping bitterly, rested her head on her faithful bosom.

"Lady," exclaimed Beatrice, "you are in a lion's den, and you will become the hapless prey."

"O," continued she, "if I could only see for one minute that pretty youth Owen, perhaps he would devise some means to rid us from the fell grasp of this proud lordling. Lady, I would rather lay you in your winding sheet, than deck you in a bridal robe to wed you to such a monster. His very look is enough to kill you; for his eyes are like two flames of fire when they dart upon you."

"I pray, good Beatrice, talk not of

Owen, for he cannot aid us, poor youth !
Though I know him to be "*faithful to the end*," yet caged in this prison-house, he cannot burst its iron bars, nor liberate us from bondage."

"Love's devices, my sweet lady," interrupted Beatrice, trying to cheer her, "are manifold, and so ingenious, who dare say what may not come to pass, if managed with dexterity."

"Owen dare not, cannot penetrate these Castle walls," cried Elwyna, in a tone of despair. "As well might you expect rescue from an enemy, as him to aid our flight. To whence alas ! were escape possible could we fly, now that my father favors Earl Warren's suit."

"Father Alselmo," replied Beatrice, quick in devising plans, "would join your hands. He loves the youth Owen, and for myself, I would follow you, dear lady, to the world's end, and share your fortunes."

"Speak not so wildly," added the desponding Elwyna.

"Retire then," proceeded Beatrice, "to some holy sanctuary. Wenlock monastery will give you refuge. The Abbess will protect you."

"It is there alone," said Elwyna, "the pious vestal may demand admittance, and the soul, sublimed above all worldly objects, dare repose."

"Yet," she continued, "would but father Alselmo join our hands in holy wedlock, then with my loved Owen I might share the fortunes of his future destiny. In his presence I should know no fear, no danger; though the battle raged, were he but safe, his tent would prove a peaceful couch, and every ill would be defied when he were with me."

"Beatrice, it is now midnight; I will to prayer. Guide me to the sacred oratory which terminates the gallery. In the stillness of this solemn hour, my heart shall pour its sufferings to the pitying Virgin."

Elwyna rose, and Beatrice carried the lamp which stood in the chamber before

her. Every creature was hushed in sleep, and nature reposed under the curtained canopy of heaven. As with holy awe the light and slender form of the fair Elwyna glided through the long deserted gallery, she might have passed for some light vision of another sphere, drest in her rochet* of white lawn, and her wimple† flowing round her neck. They descended by a flight of stone steps into the oratory. It was already lighted. Large wax tapers in golden candlesticks blazed on the altar, before which was a prostrate figure bending in deep humiliation. One hand was elevated towards a painting of a dying Saviour, whilst the other fervently pressed a crucifix to his bosom.

Elwyna would have fled; but the sacred lamp, which was always burning,

* A sort of lawn garment, resembling a surplice; but gathered at the wrists.

† A muffler or sort of plaited linen cloth worn round the neck.—*Strutt*.

had reflected her person in long shadow upon the wall.

The penitent starting on his feet beheld the appalling figure of what he conceived to be a spectre ; whilst Elwyna, on discovering who was the object she had encountered, stood in breathless terror transfixed to the spot.

Her colourless cheek, her shroud-like garments, and dishevelled hair, which had escaped from beneath her head-dress, gave her the air of a rebuking spirit. Nor was it to be wondered that in those days of ignorance and superstition, Earl Warren's troubled conscience awakened a feeling deeper than surprise, when Elwyna stood immovable and silent before him.

With admirable presence of mind, she endeavoured to encourage the delusion that he took her for something supernatural. She spoke not ; and drawing from her bosom with slow and solemn

action a miniature of Owen, she held it up to Earl Warren, and with her finger pointed to him to look upon the portrait. It had been given Elwyna by Owen, having been miraculously preserved by one, who lived to yet bear testimony to that sad catastrophe which implicated Earl Warren as being accessory to the murder of the boy Owen. This picture, though painted in infantine childhood, carried in its general features a strong personal resemblance at a more advanced period of his life.

Elwyna, with fearless arm, forced Earl Warren beneath the holy lamp, which always shed its light over the altar. She motioned him to gaze upon the dove-like countenance, which long he fancied had been buried beneath that river which rolled its waves around Holt Castle.

He shrunk with horror and affright from her appalling figure, and covering his face with his vestments, fell lifeless on the

steps of the altar. Earl Warren, whose towering pride, whose dauntless conduct moved all around him, dared not lift his guilty eye to look whence came the visionary form that stood beside him ; nor venture to trace the impossibility of any aerial thing possessing Owen's picture. Ah, no ! Fear is divested of all reason ; objects appear not as they truly are. Imagination shapes the most extraordinary and unnatural images ; and the mind creates a phantasmagoria the most absurd and impossible.

Earl Warren fancied the light and visionary figure of Elwyna that of Owen's mother, Emma ap Gryffydd, the late consort of Sir Roger Mortimer ; and that she had risen from her new-made grave, to menace and reproach him for the destruction of her orphan son ; and while with pointed finger she displayed his innocent resemblance in the picture which she held, and must have been buried with

her, she denounced vengeance and maledictions on his head.

Scarcely did Elwyna seem to touch the ground, as with light but solemn steps she slowly glided from the oratory into the gallery where Beatrice was weary of waiting, so long did Elwyna seem to have been absent. Not even to her did she communicate the mysterious secret of the night. She had terrified a murderer, whom awe and panic struck she left, a monument of guilty condemnation.

She was now persuaded that Owen's tale was true, for the criminal stood convicted before her untried by any other tribunal than his own conscience.

Elwyna looked back with wonder at her courage and intrepidity in the conduct she had just pursued, enfeebled as she was by illness, and naturally of a timid disposition. The idea was momentary which had excited the action, and arose from the conviction that she was taken

by Earl Warren for a supernatural being, conveying in that shape the most appalling recollections. The sensation that instantly thrilled through his frame was electric. All that stern dignity, that rude ferocity, that bold defiance, that set at nought all mankind, and which marked his character, sunk at once into the most humiliating debasement. He dared not lift his eye, and lay extended in shrinking cowardice on the earth, which he fain would have called upon eternally to cover him.

Elwyna retired to her couch, and fell into a refreshing slumber.

In the morning she received an order from her father, to be in readiness to depart before noon.

The Castle was in a scene of the utmost confusion and alarm. Earl Warren had been found in a state of wild delirium in the oratory. How long he had been thus affected was unknown. He uttered the most terrible things; and seemed, ac-

according to his discourse, or rather extravagant incoherence, to have been visited by a female spectre, denouncing the most alarming threats of vengeance.

Elwyna listened to this narrative with a suppressed smile. She wondered at the weakness and credulity of this intrepid minded man ; for such the world thought this commanding tyrant, whose frown was intended to subdue mankind, whose word was that of power and thunder.

To what was he now not sunk, when a feeble woman could thus in a moment crush him to the earth, and deprive him of reason.

Elwyna was prompt in obeying her father's summons. Thus to be freed by a stratagem of her own, from her present bondage, seemed most extraordinary.

When the heavy portcullis of the Castle was raised, and Elwyna found herself once more beyond its merciless tyrant, she lifted her hands in gratitude for her freedom.

Sir Roger Mortimer, having placed Elwyna under safe convoy, retraced his steps back to Holt Castle, for what purpose was unknown to his daughter ; but his air was abstracted, stern, and irresolute as he parted from her. "You will attend Elwyna," he said, "at our evening banquet. Let it be cheerily. Now speed homewards."

As Elwyna's steed paced the ground that conducted her towards Gwayn, and the gloomy pile of building wherein she had been imprisoned receded from her view, never before had she thought each varied object in creation half so beautiful. The gay melody of the feathered choir, the bright sparkling of the river dancing in the sunshine, the rich and tender tints of the shady woodlands, diffused a gladness to her spirits, such as they never before had experienced.

Fain would Elwyna have made Beatrice participate in her feelings ; but Beatrice, though passing good, was without senti-

ment ; and cordially as she would, from attachment to her lady, have assented to her opinion, she was wholly divested of those fine sensibilities which harmonize with all that is lovely in creation.

Again the venerable trees of that long line of avenue which marked the grand approach to Gwayn Castle broke on Elwyna's view. The turrets were partially seen above the embowering woods. The park sloping to the verge of the high road, presented herds of deer coursing over its soft and velvet carpet.

Here was Elwyna's home. The mirthful season of childhood mingled with the tender remembrance that Owen had shared in those innocent pastimes. She crossed a shady and sequestered glade, embowered in wild rose trees, at the foot of which wandered the babbling Ceiriog, where they had oftentimes sat together on the enamelled turf, to weave garlands of flowers to deck a favorite little lambkin ; a fawn also had, often, with the swiftness

of an arrow, stole into their peaceful solitude to be fed. Where was Owen now? Lost alike to her, whether he slept beneath the rolling waters of the impetuous Dee, or pined in the rayless gloom of a dungeon at Holt Castle. These mournful ideas in a moment chased away the lively sensations which had been excited on first viewing the beautiful landscapes that met her eye in all directions.

The most profound stillness reigned in the Castle, as Elwyna passed on to her apartment. The knights and esquires had respectfully retired, on her entrance into the great hall, and only her page, along with Beatrice, waited upon her.

In vain did Elwyna glance her eyes around with eager inquiry in search of Owen. She paused with anxious steps in the long gallery which led to the suite of apartments exclusively her own. She stood for some minutes at one of the windows lost in abstraction, as she vacantly looked into the spacious court

which the whole of one wing of the gallery occupied.

The portraits of her ancestors, as their figures stood prominent on the walls, to Elwyna seemed so many spectres of departed friends, as she partially viewed them. One picture particularly arrested her attention; and she turned back to gaze on the majestic and striking figure of the warrior it represented. He was passed the flower of youth; but appeared scarcely more than in the meridian of life. He stood in a posture of contemplation, leaning on his sword, with his helmet off, which displayed his open and commanding brow; the grandeur of his mien, the eagle glance of his piercing eye, so like Owen's.

Elwyna paused; she wondered that never before she had remarked this portrait, and became most anxious to know for whom it was intended. Lost in contemplation, as she gazed and mused upon this distinguished person, (for such his

countenance and appearance discovered him to be), she heeded not the step of some one passing through the gallery, until startled by a voice, which in a gentle, yet solemn accent, whispered in her ear, "May the holy Virgin protect you from harm, sweet lady."

Elwyna, surprised at the gracious benison, turned quickly round, and beheld father Alselmo, passing through the gallery.

"Stay, reverend father," she cried, "I pray you, if not on some holy errand. Fain would I receive comfort from your pious lips, for greatly have I been afflicted and sorely tried."

"Afflictions," he replied, "are given to put our virtues to the test, to try our fortitude, to call for our resignation to the divine will; therefore afflictions are good for us, my daughter."

"At confession," continued he, "repose your sorrows; and be assured of comfort. Till when, peace light on you."

Extending his arms over her head, he bowed low, and crossed himself.

Again he was departing, when Elwyna, in a hesitating voice, called after him.

“Father, father Alselmo.”

“What would you daughter?”

“Nought of import,” she replied, “I am ashamed thus to detain you, yet fain would I inquire of you, who so long hast dwelt beneath these castle walls, for whom this painting was intended (extending her hand towards it). Have you not seen, good father, one to whom it bears a strong resemblance?”

Alselmo started. His cheek was in a moment blanched, and a sort of convulsive shudder passed over his frame.

He was silent.

Again Elwyna’s question was with earnestness repeated.

“Lady,” said father Alselmo, vainly struggling to conceal his agitation, “the question is so singular, I know not how to answer you.”

“Wherefore singular?” she repeated, with increased impatience. “Is there any hidden mystery connected with its history?”

“Lady, I must not, I cannot speak,” he replied, as a hectic colour passed over his cheek, and he chased away a rising tear with his sleeve, while his agitation increased.

“Think you not,” Elwyna continued, not seeming to remark Alselmo’s extraordinary agitation, “this portrait, comparing youth with manhood, the very image of Owen, or rather what he will be in maturer age. True, there is more beaming softness in the eye of Owen, yet at times the expression is the same. That lofty carriage too, is so like his.”

“The man,” exclaimed Alselmo, in a low solemn voice, “whom that portrait resembles, long has slept in death.”

“That may be,” returned Elwyna, “yet related to Owen. Perhaps his father.”

"Owen's father!" interrupted he, "alas! poor Owen. Little could that father read thy cruel fate. Yet God was gracious to thee."

"What mean you?" cried Elwyna in alarm, as she regarded the meek Alselmo, whose every feature was expressive of some extraordinary emotion passing in his mind.

"There are circumstances," he proceeded gravely, "gentle daughter, in the events of life, that admit not of disclosure; nor will endure developement."

"Your pardon, holy father," said Elwyna.

Thus answered, she presumed not to further question Alselmo, remarking the peculiar seriousness of his words and manner, which seemed to imply some tale of horror connected with the picture and the life of Owen.

The portrait was the same that so sensibly had struck Sir Roger Mortimer, as bearing such an extraordinary resem-

blance to Owen ; it had excited the most tumultuous emotions in his bosom ; and he intended to have displaced the picture, had not the quick events which succeeded one another, connected with his daughter, caused it still to retain a station in the gallery.

Father Alselmo came to Gwayn Castle in the suite of Emma ap Gryffydd on her marriage with Sir Roger Mortimer. He was her confessor ; the pastor of her soul, and he shared that portion of her confidence, which the priesthood ever retain over weak and credulous minds.

Father Alselmo was superstitious and bigotted like all his brethren ; particularly in those dark ages, when men were not so much enlightened by a liberal education. But the fervour of his piety was sincere, though it was clouded by prejudice and error. His zeal sprang from the heart ; a heart pure, meek and excellent ; and which regulated the habits of his life, fraught with deeds of

charity, brotherly kindness, and love; all of which were exemplified in continual acts of self denial, imposed by the most rigid severity and forbearance.

From Emma ap Gryffydd he received large donations for needy convents, to visit which he made long and frequent pilgrimages. To that of Wenlock* he was most zealously devoted. The

* This abbey takes its denomination from the town of Wenlock, near which it stands. It was founded about the year 680 by Milburgha, daughter to King Merwald, and niece of Wolphere King of Mercia; she presided as Abbess, and at her death was buried here.

The monastery is situated in a small bottom, having the town on the east. It is surrounded on all sides by gently ascending grounds. At present it has no body of water near it; but from some remaining dams, it seems as if there had formerly been some pools or ponds.—*Grose's Antiquities.*

When the author saw Wenlock Abbey in 1820, it was broken into detached and picturesque ruins. One part containing a stately range of columns richly adorned with tracery work; and the nave of what was formerly the chapel, is covered with a profusion of ivy.

Lady Abbess was his cousin-german, and she maintained her character of the holy mother with a dignity, yet sanctified meekness, which excited the veneration not only of the sisterhood, who looked upon her as little less than a saint, but as such she was renowned in every other monastery.

After the death of Emma ap Gryffydd, father Alselmo remained stationary at Gwayn Castle. But from that period those who before had known Alselmo, remarked the former cheerfulness and activity of his character was gone, and a dark shade of sorrow hung over his brow, which even his natural benignant aspect could not dispel. His was such a head as Domimichino would have sketched for one of the holy apostles. His tall and slender figure, though somewhat bent, was not spoiled by age; for it was so meek, so dignified, so saint-like, that a sinner gladly would have worshipped in expectation of being made better. His pale, yet ani-

mated face, possessed that fine contour, which marked all the milder virtues springing from the heart, to lighten up that face. An eye so full of resignation, yet so elevated by faith, as it with confiding hope beamed upon his flock. Who could look at Father Alselmo and not feel amended! His high commanding forehead, with a few silver hairs scattered on his open and benignant brow, gave an aspect truly venerable and sanctified to his appearance.

Such was Alselmo! He had been Owen's tutor, pastor, protector. He had introduced the poor deserted boy into Gwayn Castle, soon after the death of Emma ap Gryffydd. Who he really was, only Alselmo knew. He had cherished him with fondness—he seemed precious to him as his own soul—and he beheld, with silent apprehension, the dangers by which he was surrounded, and heard of his threatened removal with alarm. He had secret reasons only known to himself

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for desiring to detain him at the Castle, which he considered most important towards his future advancement in life.

Elwyna, on retiring from the gallery, meditated on Father Alselmo's mysterious replies to the questions which she had put to him. She was now assured that her late conjectures were not unfounded—that some extraordinary events were attached to the life of Owen—and that he possessed by right a higher rank in society than was consistent with his present lowly station. The personal dignity of his carriage proclaimed him of noble descent, and bore a marked resemblance to the warrior, which could scarcely be accidental. Though Alselmo cautiously evaded her inquiries, she was convinced there was a close affinity between that exalted personage and Owen. Wherefore the portrait maintained so conspicuous a place in the gallery, whilst Owen was so degraded and depressed, appeared incomprehensible. A suspicion at once painful and alarming arose, that

her father had not done justice to this interesting youth ; and she fancied he possessed some claim in right of his sire, to property attached to Gwayn Castle, to which, from some hidden and unknown cause, he presumed not to aspire, so adverse and unhappy seemed his present circumstances.

Thus pondering on Owen's fate, she was roused from her reverie by the sound of the bugle, which announced Sir Roger Mortimer's return to the Castle. In trembling anxiety, she expected a summons ; but the hours passed away in silence. None came, and she learnt her father had withdrawn to his council room on some special business, and was not to be disturbed.

Elwyna, having shared with Beatrice her repast, was invited by the serene loveliness of the evening to walk abroad. Covering herself with a veil, Beatrice carried her virginal.*

* A musical instrument, so called because commonly used by young ladies.—*Bacon*.

She directed her steps towards a shady recess, where unobserved she could indulge her pensive strains. Having seated herself on a mossy bank, she sung in a low tender voice the following air, to the soft tones of her virginal.

“ O welcome bat and owlet gray,
Thus winging low your airy way ;
And welcome moth and drowsy fly,
That to mine ear come humming by ;
And welcome shadows long and deep,
And stars that from the pale sky peep ;
O welcome all ! to me ye say,
My woodland love is on her way.†”

She had scarcely concluded, when the stanza was responded by another voice and instrument, in strains the most enchanting.

“ Upon the soft wind floats her hair,
Her breath is in the dewy air ;
Her steps are in the whisper'd sound,
That steals along the stilly ground.”

† Adapted to the air Mantell Siani, by Miss J. Baillie.

“ O dawn of day in rosy bower,
What art thou to this witching hour !
O noon of day in sun-shine bright,
What art thou to the fall of night ! ”

Trembling and alarmed, Elwyna rose in hasty disorder, for it seemed as though the woods were peopled by the sylvan deities ; for surely such soft and tuneful melody never stole on mortal ear, rendering as it were every tree vocal.

Seizing the arm of Beatrice, she would have fled, but she had not power to move, and Elwyna bade her listen and discover whence came such melodious sounds.

“ ’Tis the fairies, lady,” said Beatrice ; “ they take their revels nightly here. When the moon is higher, you will see them tripping along ; it is in this mossy glade they sport, if we have not already disturbed them, for I hear no music now, except indeed the distant notes of the black-bird, which comes to greet us with its evening song.”

“ The voice I heard,” replied Elwyna,

"was like Owen's, and the words were soothing to my soul, for they spoke of love and constancy."

"Then, lady," returned Beatrice, "it must be some wicked spirit sent to chain you to this spot for evil purposes; let us away. In these woods there dwells a maniac of demoniac spirit. Within a cave he lives, tended by an ancient hag they call his mother. Oft times Father Alselmo visits him, ministers to his wants, and prays beside him; nay, it is said, by invoking St. David, he has power to calm the maniac's raging spirit."

"I will visit the unhappy creature. Beatrice, we will go to-morrow; you shall show me the cave."

"Not for the love of the Blessed Virgin," exclaimed Beatrice in alarm, "would I attend you, lady. A madman is more fearful than a roaring lion; with one touch he might tear you to pieces. He utters fearful things, and except to Father Al-

selmo, and Owen, who also visits him, he is outrageous. Were not his face so distorted by frenzy, I have heard he bears so strong a resemblance to Owen, he might be taken for his twin brother."

"But let us be gone," continued she, in trepidation. "The darkness and solitude of this place is frightful. Hark! I heard a footstep, and a rustling in the trees."

Elwyna heard the same, though no human form appeared. Alarm gave strength and swiftness to their steps; and with the lightness of fleet youth, they quickly reached the Castle.

Elwyna retired to her bed, thinking more of the maniac than even Owen; wondering who could be the unhappy creature imprisoned in a cave, so strongly resembling Owen, that he might pass for his twin brother. She resolved with early day to visit this unfortunate being; not from a feeling of idle curiosity, but with a hope that she might mitigate his mourn-

ful and forlorn condition, by removing him to some place less desolate than the one described, if his madness was not incurable.

Elwyna defied danger, when by encountering it she hoped to do good. Though formed with all the native tenderness of her sex, she was divested of cowardly weakness, and possessed a firmness that strengthened her humanity. She was naturally timid and retiring, yet was not abashed or disarmed by trifles.

When Elwyna in the morning signified to Beatrice her intention of visiting the maniac, she stood aghast; nor was it until more than an hour had elapsed in argument and persuasion, she could be prevailed upon to attend her lady. The countenance of Beatrice expressed only terror, while she unceasingly argued all the way with Elwyna on the hazard and boldness of her enterprize.

Elwyna, though pensive and silent, remained firm to her purpose. She fol-

lowed the lad she had engaged as a guide above a mile, through woods which scarcely admitted a ray of the sun, so exuberant were the branches of the trees, so wild the pathless road they traversed.

Almost weary and exhausted, Elwyna began to despair reaching the place she sought, when the lad pointed out the situation of the spot, close on the little rural village of Penn y clawdd, at the distance of three miles from Gwayn Castle, though this romantic nook might almost be said to be within its confines.

There was a wild loneliness in the place which somberly harmonized with the deep gloom of the far extending woods, into which Elwyna again penetrated. But there was no appearance of any rock out of which a cave could be formed. Elwyna enquired of the children whom curiosity had prompted to follow her, where the cave was situated which contained the unhappy being she sought.

The Welsh peasantry, even in these more enlightened days, in the remote parts, are ignorant in the extreme.

Elwyna's question, in the present instance, would have proved quite inexplicable, if the oldest of the girls, who often went to fetch water from the stream which flows through Haldon woods, had not been familiar with the person and the place.

"You mean, lady," said the girl, "the *Awenyddion** ; he dwells close on the brook that runs through Haldon woods.† I will shew you the place. He can tell you wonderful things that are past, and what is to come. He rages sorely when

* There are certain persons in Wales called *Awenyddion*, a sort of prophets, or people inspired ; when consulted on any doubtful events, they roar out and brawl as if possessed of an evil spirit. They deliver the answers in sentences that are trifling, and have little meaning, but are elegantly expressed.—*Brønd's Popular Antiquities*.

† A person lived some years since in a hut in Haldon woods, denominated *Silly Billy*, half idiot and madman.

the fit is on him ; but at other times, poor creature, he is as gentle as a lamb."

Beatrice, frightened at all she heard, slowly lingered behind, whilst Elwyna proceeded with her guide, attended by a group of children close at her heels.

The hut, not cave, where this unfortunate being dwelt, was composed of mud covered with turf; an apperture was made sufficient to admit a gleam of light, and a few rough boards formed the door, which was thrown open. The hut stood at the verge of a little rippling stream, and so embowered in trees, it was difficult to detach it from the pensile foliage. With gentle steps Elwyna approached, the girl preceding her, over whose shoulder she looked, and discerned the singular looking object within.

The *Arwenyddion* was seated in a musing posture ; his cheek pale and wan, reclined on his arm, which rested at one corner of a clumsy wooden table. His uncombed raven locks waved in wild and

glossy ringlets over his faded countenance, partially shading a lowering but commanding forehead, and thick finely arched eye brows. His full black eyes shot fire, as they darted from beneath his long eye lashes, on something which he was earnestly contemplating; while his lip was turned into a scornful smile, as it quivered with a sort of convulsive laugh, which made Elwyna shudder, and she started away in terror.

The figure of the man was so slender, he might have passed for a phantom when he stood up. He was drest in a coarse brown tunic, confined by a belt of leather. His hair, naturally beautiful, fell luxuriantly to his shoulders. Madge (the girl who had followed Elwyna) entered the threshold with familiarity.

Madoc stared up when he saw her. In a deep melancholy, but angry tone, he exclaimed, "Begone wench; what want ye here; we have nothing to bestow, neither do we require ought from any one."

"A gentle lady," replied Madge, not moving, "comes to visit you."

"We desire no idle company," interrupted he, with increased displeasure. "Great halls are suited best for noble dames. When I was a youngling," proceeded he, "I slept on crimson sattin in my mother's arms; I walked in rooms of state, beneath gilt canopies, and hung with richest tapestry and velvet. But of that no more," with a heavy sigh. "It is like an idle dream; and though my busy brain would conjure into idle fantasies that such things were, this shed is now my home, this crystal brook my drink, the simplest herbs my food, and this poor crone my sentinel." Thus concluding, he with outstretched hand gently stroked the cheek of the withered hag who tended him.

Elwyna drew near, and beheld the old crone seated on a high backed wooden chair placed at the side of the chimney corner, knitting. Her eyes were

bleared, and her skin smoke dried with constantly hovering over the embers. About her head was wrapt a dirty volpуре, from beneath which strayed a few white hairs. Above a yellow woollen petticoat, she wore a kirtle* patched with various colors, and her gispire† hung before. She sang in a deep toned dissonant voice, a sort of lilt ‡, in mournful ditty, in snatches, as she eyed the companion of her forlorn dwelling.

“Good-day to you, Amy,” said Madge, who was not to be repulsed.

“You are troublesome, wench,” exclaimed the old crone. “Did not Madoc bid you depart, and you stand idling here forsooth, and must bring along with you curious gentles?”

Amy rose from her seat to close the door upon them; but Elwyna had caught the quickly penetrating eye of Madoc, as she stood partly within the threshold.

* A short jacket. † Pocket.

‡ A ballad, a tune to sing.—Burns.

Her radiant beauty, as it broke upon his sight, the supplicating look of gentleness she wore, in a moment changed the strong expression of anger the Awenyddion wore, to one of eager curiosity and wonder, as he ardently gazed upon her; while with a timid but hasty step he advanced to where she stood, that he might view her more closely. With one hand he put back his flowing ringlets that partially shaded his face while he extended the other to greet her; and then, as if abashed, he placed it in his breast.

“Whence come ye,” said he, in a tremulous accent, “beauteous vision, at once so lovely and so fearless?”

The look of tender enquiry, the tone of his voice thrilled Elwyna to the soul, so like Owen’s.

“From whence I come,” she replied greatly agitated, “it matters not. To ease your hapless destiny, I have ventured here, presumed to search you out, and

thus to break upon your dreary solitude."

"To ease my solitude," he exclaimed, with a burst of laughter wild and terrible. "Woman, I am doomed to pass my life in this lone wilderness, remote from all mankind.

"But when a day of retribution comes," he added emphatically, "and come it will, hardly will be judged that monster who robbed me of my birth-right. Lady, you have seen the villain. He would wed a noble dame, but beware of such a one. He stalks abroad, he lives in regal Castles. He has knights, esquires, retainers."

"Of whom do you speak?" Elwyna demanded, pretending not to comprehend him.

"So young," he cried, his brow clouding, and his eyes sparkling with indignation, "and yet so great a hypocrite. Oh! world of falsehood and deceit! Can those beauteous eyes which shine as

brightly as the evening star, bless with their gentle influence that monster who destroyed me. Can those rosy lips breathing words of such soothing sweetness, be polluted with sounds so false and treacherous."

"Woman," he continued, in a vexed and angry tone, "you know of whom I speak. What monster stalks abroad except the proud Earl Warren. It is he would wed you; but by that heaven on which I gaze, as surely as he does, I will burst this prison house, and with the maddening frenzy of revenge, which rages in this bosom, tear you from his arms, and send him headlong to destruction."

"It is Earl Warren," cried Madoc, stamping with passion, "and the usurper, Sir Roger Mortimer, who revel in my father's castles. Beneath the waves they guess I sleep. Those impetuous waves, they thought would prove my grave, bore me safely on its watery bosom, to the

friendly shore. Though my burning brain is often touched with madness, yet, sweet one," added he, gently stroking Elwyna's cheek, "I will not harm your father, nor tear the nestling from the parent's wing, to droop and die unsheltered."

"Forbear, in pity," exclaimed Elwyna, weeping bitterly. "I can hear no more, unhappy man; for there is such method in your madness, if mad you be, I am overwhelmed with horror. Every word you utter unfolds such evil deeds. I dread to hear a father's name so coupled with iniquity."

"Yet surely," proceeded she, steadfastly regarding him, "it must be only the wild phantom of a mind diseased. You dare not, cannot say, that my father is a murderer. I will pledge my life," she added solemnly, "it is a falsehood."

"Then," interrupted Madoc sternly, "would that life be forfeit."

"Get you away," he continued, "for

if I longer parley with you, soon shall I chace the sunshine from that sweet face, and flood with tears those dove-like eyes, which, with such melting softness beam upon me. This," he cried, again relapsing into his former harshness, "is no place for gentle courtesies. I know them not. My heart has long been cold to all its best affections; therefore speed ye away; and God protect you, sweet one." He grasped Elwyna's hand, with kindly pressure, while he brushed hastily away a scalding tear, as with half averted face he gazed upon her and rushed into the hut.

* * *

THE fading light reminded Mr. Fortescue that it was time to take leave of Gwayn Castle. The day had imperceptibly passed on with no interruption, except the repeated entrance of Mrs.

Lloyd with refreshments. When dinner was served up he was entirely absorbed in the interesting manuscript, he would not pause to even dine at the hospitable table spread for him. Yet Mr. Fortescue did frequently pause at various intervals, to ponder on this extraordinary and romantic legend.

In the dead stillness which pervaded the place, (the library was distant from the suite of apartments usually occupied), he more than once fancied, that he saw gliding in the shadowy twilight the stately figure of Sir Roger Mortimer, the youthful tender Elwyna, and the slight, graceful Owen. But they all for centuries had slept in peace. Their woes were ended. A new race peopled the Castle. In that race, ah! how lovely, how precious, was one object. In her was comprised a world of itself; nor could Elwyna, to his imagination, have been more beautiful than Edelfrida Griffiths.

Mr. Fortescue left a request for permission to return to the Castle on the following day.

Again he reached Gwayn, after taking a hasty breakfast. The Castle was vacated as before by Miss Griffiths. He was ushered into the library, when the manuscript was respectfully placed before him by Mrs. Lloyd, and he resumed the narrative as follows : —

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:

Printed by A. and R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

OLD STORIES.

LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

OLD STORIES.

BY

MISS SPENCE,

AUTHOR OF "A TRAVELLER'S TALE,"

&c. &c.

———— Many a tale
Traditional, round the mountains hung,
And many a legend peopling the dark woods.
Wordsworth.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

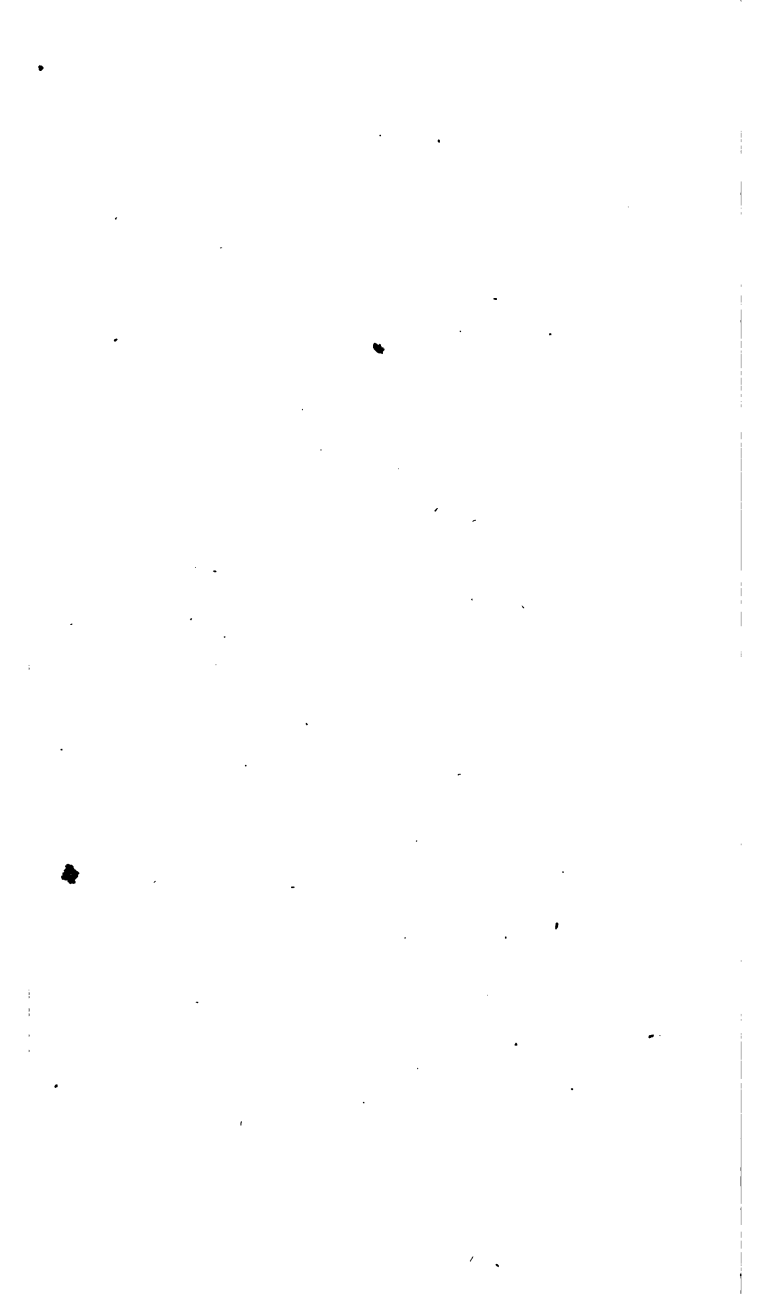
LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1822.



OLD STORIES.

THE SECOND PART OF THE KNIGHT'S DAUGHTER.

* * * * For some minutes, Elwyna remained fixed to the spot powerless to depart, from the surprise and agitation into which Madoc had thrown her. When she in some degree recovered her composure, she went in search of Beatrice, who had now ventured within the hut, and in vain she looked and called aloud, for she was not to be found.

Beatrice, terrified at the wild look and extraordinary gestures of Madoc, only at a first glance, had precipitately retreated to a distance with the children, who had followed them from Pennyclawdd, where she found every endeavour to get

Elwyna away from the rude dwelling of Madoc was useless.

Again Elwyna made the woods reverberate with her voice, when she was answered, not by Beatrice, but by Orlando, who quickly advanced to meet her.

“What would the Lady Elwyna?” said he, in a voice of tender and earnest inquiry. “Whom seek you? In this wild solitude, it is strange to meet you thus alone, and unattended!”

“Lead me, good youth, I pray you,” she exclaimed, not regarding his questions, “from this lonely place, and call aloud for Beatrice, who has deserted me.”

“Dear Owen! you are come most opportunely to my aid.”

“Haldon woods,” proceeded Owen, with a degree of emotion and surprise he could ill suppress, “is not a place marked out for rural pastime, Lady; you must surely know (or else I should not see you here) that in this sequestered spot, there dwells a hapless creature, whose sad

destiny, if it claims not pity, surely is not formed to meet the gaze of idle curiosity."

"Oh say," cried Elwyna, not observing his extraordinary emotion, nor his sharp rebuke, "*who* is the hapless being in that lone dwelling, that lives remote from all mankind? Who placed him there? What is his name — his lineage?"

"Lady," returned Owen, with mournful solemnity, "we are the offspring of one parent. But of our lineage, it profits not for me to tell. Touched with partial madness, Madoc dwells content: by him the joys or woes of life are alike unknown — untasted; whilst I, boldly aspiring to a state of bliss, which only Elwyna can bestow, and I dare not presume ever to attain; gladly would exchange my overwhelming misery for that unconscious state which in Madoc we deplore, if by such a one I might possess Elwyna's pity."

"Cease, Owen," said she, shuddering, "to breathe a wish so impious."

“Does then Elwyna with tenderness requite that love, which like a consuming fire preys upon me?”

“Can Owen doubt it,” replied Elwyna, fondly extending her hand. He seized it with rapture.

“And will she plight it on this moment to that lover who *is faithful to the end?*”

Elwyna blushed in timid silence. “Nor allow,” continued he with vehemence, “the proud Earl Warren to claim this loved endearment?” pressing her hand with fervour to his lips.

Still she spoke not—

“Nor suffer him to tear my sweet Elwyna from my arms, and in haughty triumph bear her to the shrine of Hymen?”

“To you my vows,” she replied with tenderness, “of love and constancy I plight, ever, like you, dear Owen, *faithful to the end*. But if a father wills it otherwise,” she added, in a faltering accent, “blame not that cruel destiny which tears me from you.”

“ Mean you to say then,” cried he with disappointment and surprise, “ that you will wed Earl Warren ? ”

“ Heaven forbid that I should so say !— My heart is yours, and yours alone, dear Owen ; then rest content—and if we part, believe that force alone divides us.”

“ Take her, Owen,” exclaimed Madoc, rushing in between them, and seizing a hand of each. “ If within this fair flower, so perfect and so beautiful, lurks no cankering worm, you are of all men then most blest. Love her — cherish her as she merits. Fear not Earl Warren : the proud lordling,” he added, with a menacing look and voice, “ shall be crushed. For this sweet one’s sake, Mortimer shall sleep in peace. If his conscience sleeps, none shall disturb his slumbers ! ”

“ Hush,” cried Owen, hastily interrupting Madoc, and starting away, “ the merry bugle sounds the approach of hunters near at hand.”

“ Lady,” addressing Elwyna, and lead-

ing her into the thickest part of the wood, “let me retreat in time; I hear the quick advance of horsemen. If you answer, to me the event may prove most fatal. In pity then take shelter from the enemy in Madoc’s dwelling.”

Madoc, on the loud blast of the horn, had precipitately fled into his hut; and so securely barricaded the door, none could obtain admittance.

Elwyna partially concealed herself beneath the wide branches of a spreading oak, whilst Owen went towards the road to listen and to watch. The sound of the horses’ hoofs gradually died away, and it appeared certain the huntsmen had taken an opposite direction, to the great relief of Elwyna and Owen.

She now besought him to go in quest of Beatrice, and then to leave her.

Soon Owen discovered Beatrice in the midst of the children, with whom she was discoursing. He immediately conducted her to Elwyna, at the same time rebuking

her for going so far away, and leaving her lady.

Beatrice pleaded her excuse in the terror excited by Madoc's wild appearance and discourse.

Owen heard her with a melancholy smile.

Having restored her to Elwyna, she insisted on Owen's immediately quitting them.

"Farewell!" exclaimed she in a tone of firmness, while a starting tear spoke her emotion. "May we meet again under happier auspices! If it will mitigate the painful separation," she added mournfully, "believe Elwyna is not less wretched than yourself!"

"If indeed you speak the truth," interrupted he, in earnest supplication, "suffer at once the good Alselmo to conduct you in the night to Wenlock's hallowed sanctuary. There repose ye with the holy mother. Then shall the proud Earl Warren meet a foe, who will

not tamely yield Elwyna to his usurping arms ; nor be supplanted in her love by one who may prove his formidable rival."

"Wenlock's holy sanctuary would be profaned by a step so rash. None may enter there, but those most pure and sanctified."

"Then let Alseldo," interrupted Owen with vehemence, "join our hands. It is no low-born youth you'll wed. My blood is noble as your father's, and if the rights of Owen are restored, then shall my sweet Elwyna share with him a princely palace."

"You speak in fables," replied Elwyna, in a desponding voice. "But whether my Owen be of high or low descent, Elwyna's love's the same."

"For the present," she continued, "I pray you get you hence. The day advances to meridian height ; again the merry bugle's sound draws near ; farther discourse may prove most dangerous. — Farewell then, dearest Owen !"

Elwyna hastily emerged into the woods, waving her hand to Owen not to follow.

Soon he disappeared in a contrary direction, while Elwyna and Beatrice made their way back, with all possible speed to Gwayn castle.

Several pages here were torn away, and some of the succeeding ones were so much defaced they only became legible at the following part.

It was many days before Earl Warren recovered from the delirium which had seized him, at the moment the figure of Elwyna appeared to him in the oratory, under the imaginary form which imagination conjured up of that of Emma ap Gryffydd. His wild and incoherent ravings, terrified all those who attended

upon him ; and, in dismay and alarm, they fled from his presence.

One only person knew to what he alluded ; that was Sir Roger Mortimer, Equally credulous and superstitious as himself, he readily credited the account which he gave of the fair visionary ; and was so appalled by the recollection of some events long gone by, he took a hasty leave of Earl Warren, after witnessing one of his fits of delirium, and he returned to Gwayn castle. There he meditated on new devices and plans, the nature of which will be seen hereafter.

Sir Roger Mortimer had not seen his daughter since she had left Holt castle ; nor had she yet been commanded to his presence. By her the interval of time was filled with painful apprehension, in the dreaded expectation of some dire event occurring to crush her promised engagement with Owen. In life there are such intervals — when hope, suspense, alarm, fills up the mighty vacuum ; — when the

mind, a stranger to repose, is unable to even engage in those pursuits which taste devises, whilst listless and unhappy.

Though Sir Roger Mortimer had withdrawn himself from the company of his daughter at those stated times, when she usually joined in his society ; she, in the meanwhile, occupied all his thoughts and attention. Various were the plans which he devised for the accomplishment of an union with Earl Warren. The native softness of Elwyna's character, served to render compulsion cruel towards a being so tender and so timid. Warily she must be drawn into the snare ; and the strata-gem which he at length devised, he did not doubt would bestow her on Earl Warren.

To fulfil his plan, it must be arranged with so much promptitude and artifice ; not even the ever - watchful Alseldo, whom Sir Roger feared and hated, would be able to protect either Elwyna or Owen from the hidden snare.

Earl Warren, in the meantime, as his

strength of mind became restored, more firmly resolved to possess Elwyna. He and Sir Roger had so arranged their purposes together, that he felt assured Elwyna must ultimately be his, and all Owen's proffered love be set at naught; so ingeniously had he planned his destruction.

* * * * *

Some pages of the manuscript here lost.

* * * * *

The steward of Sir Roger Mortimer's household, signified, by his order, to all the country round, that the following Thursday, on which the Lady Elwyna Mortimer became of age, an entertainment should be given in honour of the day, with all that magnificence suitable to so joyous an event. The castle doors were to be thrown open during three successive days, to all degrees of persons, throughout the Principality, from the

noble to the peasant. Tilts, revels, music, feasting, with a sort of masque, was to conclude the entertainment.

With wonder Elwyna beheld the preparations that were making ; nor did she guess the cause, when Beatrice informed her the festival was to celebrate her natal day ; she scarcely could give credit to a circumstance so strange, under her present state of disgrace with her father.

Several days had passed away since his return from Holt castle ; but as yet they had not met. In those times a ceremonious state was maintained ; and not even a child could presume to rush into a parent's presence, when unbidden. To Elwyna's gentle breast, the banishment was terrible.

That she might no longer rest in ignorance of the prepared festival, Elwyna, on the previous evening, was summoned into the august presence of her father.

Like a trembling culprit she entered, with downcast looks.

The Knight advanced to meet his daughter, and loosing all former sternness, kindly saluted her:

"On to-morrow's dawn," said Sir Roger Mortimer, "your mother, one and twenty years ago, presented you a smiling infant to these arms which now enfold you. To celebrate your natal day," he added, "these castle walls again shall ring with joyful songs, with feasts, and revelling; we will make merry from early morn, till midnight's latest hour detain each noble guest who comes to share the pastime. With smiles adorn your face, Elwyna; and greet each noble visiter with looks of gentle courtesy; array yourself in rich attire; for Elwyna's beauty is renowned throughout the principality, and I would be sorry she were outvied even by princes' daughters."

"I will obey your wishes," said she, "dearest father; for oh! how precious to my heart is your returning kindness; to deserve it will prove my greatest joy."

"Various," continued Sir Roger Mortimer, "are the sports devised to celebrate your birth-day. The park, the woods, will be thronged with merry-maskers. If it please you best in such disguise to join the motley group, you have my free will so to do, but let your garb be splendid.

"If my Elwyna prove," he added, "the obedient child I think her, all remembrance of past offence shall be effaced; for on such a day as that we mean to celebrate, I would not have the pleasure checked by any passing cloud."

"Oh! try me not too sorely," cried Elwyna; "my dear father, on one point alone it is possible for me to prove a rebellious daughter; yet the sweet assurance that you give me, all remembrance of the past you draw a veil over, makes me boldly say all your wishes shall be fulfilled."

* * * * *

Here again many pages were torn away.

Soon after mid-day, groups of revellers were seen scattered throughout the park, of the most motley and grotesque description. The artificial lake was covered with nereids; the wild melody of whose song seemed to be responded by the echo of the groves. Pan, wood-nymphs, satyrs, fawns, sported in the sylvan shades to the soft breathing strains of their oaten reeds. Titania, also, with her fairy train, were there, clad in silken green, dancing in mystic rings. Vaulters, buffoons, too, were in the throng.

From her turret-window Elyna gazed with pensive eye on the mirthful multitude; for her heart was ill at ease, and she took little share in the lively scene; she cast a wistful look on those figures she fancied resembled the disgraced Owen.

Soon her attention was arrested towards a youthful pilgrim, accompanied by a holy palmer,* whose bended form

* A *palmer*, opposed to *pilgrim*, was one who made it his sole business to visit different holy

denoted venerable age; and though his eyes no longer emitted the fire of youthful ardour, they beamed with a chastened expression of benignity as they shone upon her.

The palmer and the pilgrim both were masked; but their mien, though clad in russet cloaks, Elwyna thought proclaimed Father Alselmo and Owen.

From her confined and narrow casement Elwyna waved her silken handkerchief; and with impatient solicitude invited their near approach. The palmer, with pious reverence, crossed his hands upon his breast. The lips of the young pilgrim moved, as though he would have spoken; but the sound of what he seemed to utter died on the passing breeze, whilst with earnestness he raised his hands in the act of supplication, and then pointed

shrines, travelling incessantly, subsisting on charity; whereas the pilgrim retired to his usual home and occupations, when he had paid his devotions to the particular spot which was the object of his pilgrimage. — *Sir Walter Scott's note in Marmion.*

to a distant figure proudly carrying himself upon a noble steed. The spot of ground over which he rode was too remote from the direction of Elwyna's window, for her to mark distinctly the passing object; but the cavalcade that followed were arrayed in accoutrements of splendour, and were making swift approach towards the castle portal. The humble palmer and his companion, on their advancing, hastily retired, and soon were lost amidst the thickest of the woods.

Elwyna, bending with ardent looks over the iron bars of her casement, was suddenly interrupted by Beatrice, who broke into her apartment.

"Lady, Lady Elwyna," exclaimed she, hastily, "your father, Sir Roger Mortimer, is enquiring why so long you tarry in your chamber. Shepherds and shepherdesses are approaching to crown you with their flowery garlands queen of the day. They have prepared a mossy couch o'erhung with choicest flowers, within a

sylvan glade, where it is said the fairy tribe do ever sport; and when evening comes, there is no question, by the glow-worm's light, you will then behold their nightly revels."

"In the hall," continued Beatrice, "a banquet is prepared of choicest dainties for those of high degree. Nobles, knights, esquires, with ladies in rich array, will all be there; for it is said, that on this night the fair Elwyna will be woo'd; and that her nuptials are to close the festive scene."

"Her burial rather, very good Beatrice," replied Elwyna, in a mournful voice; "if it indeed be true that a luckless maiden is thus entrapped with the poor semblance of joyous entertainment. Know you," added she, "whether my Lord of Warren be yet arrived, that deadly foe to peace?"

"A cavalcade," said Beatrice, "of gallant gentlemen with their pursuivants but now have crossed the draw-bridge;

Earl Warren was not of the number. Perhaps he comes not; for, if report speaks truth, since the fearful night the spectre smote him in his oratory he is gone quite crazy, and all do fear to approach his person."

"Heaven pity, and reform him!" ejaculated Elwyna.

"God rest his troubled spirit," added Beatrice crossing herself, "so that it does not light upon us.

"Lady," continued she, "you made me forget the hurry I was in, and that you must attire quickly. Your maidens wait to deck your hair, and in costly robes array your person. If you tarry longer here you will much displease your father."

With lingering steps Elwyna left the casement, from whence her eyes had vainly wandered in search of those she saw not.

Elwyna was not long in dressing. But when she beheld herself decked out in

all her gay attire, she felt no pleasure ; and, with a heavy heart, attended by her page, entered the state apartment.

Already it was filled with a numerous assemblage of noble guests, all of whom Sir Roger Mortimer was welcoming with gentle courtesy.

When Elwyna entered, the grandeur of her air, and her extraordinary beauty, seemed scarcely to require the aid of so magnificent a dress to increase that dazzling loveliness, which commanded immediate homage from the stranger-guests, who instantly crowded round her. She was dressed in a rose-coloured petticoat, over which she wore a white satin rocket fastened with a girdle of precious stones; the full sleeves looped up with knots of diamonds, and armlets of the same: her fair and silken tresses flowed in graceful natural curls to her shoulders. Her head was ornamented with a net of gold, upon which was placed the chaplet of roses, composed of emeralds and rubies, which

had been presented by Earl Warren, and which she was obliged to wear, by the express command of her father, sorely against her will.

Music and song sounded gaily throughout the castle. All the minstrels within the principality seemed to be collected; and ancient and youthful bards tried to outvie each other in excellence.

Elwyna joined a group of noble ladies of courteous manners, while many a gallant gentleman poured forth in her ears such words of adulation her heart sickened at the sound.

How strange, how inexplicable, that in all the throng she saw Owen come not — nor did her bitter foe, Earl Warren.

The gentle lady Margurette, of noble blood, with her valiant brother, Sir Humphrey Beauchamp, did homage to the grace and beauty of Elwyna. This courteous knight, late so fierce in battle, now came a humble suiter to lay his heart and laurels at Elwyna's feet.

Of her wonderous beauty report had talked so loudly, that, if by deeds of prowess she could be won, he of all men then might aspire, and lay claim to the honor of her hand.

He begged to lead her into the park, where every sort of diversion was going on. In one part were music, dancers, wrestlers, with others running at the quintin * : and the most whimsical and entertaining sports going forward.

Elwyna allowed this young and stranger knight to conduct her, accompanied by the gentle lady Margurette, to the fairy bower which had been prepared by the sylvan tribe for her reception.

On a mossy bank, o'erhung with fragrant garlands, pendant from tree to tree, they took their seat, to view the groups of masqueraders, who with antic gestures, * and fantastic movements, sported before

* Running at the quintin was a ludicrous kind of tilting at the ring, generally performed by peasants to divert their lords.

them on the green ; and, between recitation and song, acted a piece of appropriate compliment for Elwyna, in honor of the day.

“ Lady,” said her new suitor, as he gracefully bent his knee and pressed her hand to his heart, “ did I utter my admiration, my adulation in song, then might you reasonably suppose it only complimentary ; but the vows I proffer to the Lady Elwyna Mortimer, are not more ardent than they are sincere.”

“ Gracious Sir,” replied Elwyna, much distressed and surprised at his declaration, “ lavish not, I pray, your courtesies on one who has no power, except in her poor thanks, to requite your tendered vows.”

She gently withdrew the hand which he had taken.

- “ Nay, turn not thus away,” he exclaimed, with renewed ardour, “ beautiful Elwyna. Scorn not a wounded knight, whom you have made a captive to your charms.”

"Suffer a sister," interrupted the lady Margurette, "to plead, to interfere. Behold, sweetest Elwyna, his noble mien! Those eagle eyes of fire, though they made even the soldier tremble, now with looks of tender supplication would woo you with the softness of the dove. Behold that face of manly beauty! His soul is as full of honor, as his days have shone with glory. Humane, intrepid, valorous, Sir Humphrey Beauchamp combines with the courage of a warrior, those gentle sympathies that will not disgrace the man."

"Oh, press me not," said Elwyna, with increased distress, "amiable Lady Margurette, so closely.—this is a subject on which I cannot speak—could you but guess, but know the internal wretchedness of a heart I have not to bestow, then would you pity a miserable woman decked out in all these gaudy trappings, to witness the celebration of a day it had been far happier she had never seen."

“So lovely, yet so desponding,” said Sir Humphrey, deeply touched by Elwyna’s piteous look, and voice of sorrowing lamentation. — “Whence, sweetest lady,” continued he, “arises the grief that in a heart so young, it is methinks, most strange, should there inhabit? The tide of life with you is but in its early current. The gentle springs of youth flow smoothly — say, then, does a father’s anger sit heavily upon you — or a lover’s scorn? Forgive the question — but the confession of some latent sorrow excites an anxious wish, even in a stranger-knight, to aid, if possible, to mitigate your sufferings.”

“Alas! alas! most courteous knight, that cannot be — the source of my present sufferings is, I fear, past all cure, all remedy — and though I even awakened your kind sympathy, no aid of yours can do me good.”

“May your future election,” continued Elwyna mournfully, “gentle knight, be

far happier than Elwyna could have made you — and accept her grateful, humble thanks, for all those flattering courtesies shown by yourself, and your fair sister.”

Elwyna was affected by the tender sympathetic conduct of Sir Humphrey Beauchamp. She was pained, yet pleased, with his graceful ease and dignity. His brilliant eyes looked more in *“sorrow than in anger,”* as they gently beamed upon her, and a cloud passed over his noble and benignant brow. Elwyna rose from her seat in hasty disorder to depart, when again he would have taken her hand, but as hastily she sat down, while the color fled her cheek, and she was scarcely able to support herself.

The pilgrim stood before her. He spoke not, but his stately air and the keen expression of his radiant eyes, which seemed to burn more fiercely, with every other softer feature veiled in mask, and sternly turned upon her, made her tremble.

“Owen! dear Owen!” she exclaimed, in faltering accent, “why not speak—not thus sternly look?”

The pilgrim raised his finger to his lip as if demanding silence, then contemplating Elwyna for a moment, quickly vanished from her sight.

“What may he mean?” said Elwyna, in consternation and alarm. “Sure he can be none other than Owen,” unguardedly she added, not heeding the stranger and his sister, “who comes thus disguised, and will not speak.”

Sir Humphrey Beauchamp, having marked what passed with anxious and enquiring looks, now at once discovered the source of all Elwyna’s woe. Her heart then was devoted to another—to this said Owen—and it was evident not approved by Sir Roger Mortimer, who doubtless looked for one of high descent to wed his daughter. He asked Elwyna if she knew from whence the pilgrim came—what holy shrine he sought.

“For,” he added, “on the faith of a true knight, I should say he does not bear himself with that lowly mien his pious function doth proclaim.”

Elwyna absorbed — lost in thought, seemed not to hear, nor heed, Sir Humphrey Beauchamp; for in a few seconds after the pilgrim had fled, she beheld the figure of a faun, so light, so elegant, so ethereal, reclining on a marble pedestal, which formed a vista to the glade wherein she sat, breathing notes of such exquisite melody from his oaten reed, as perplexed and distressed her to a feeling bordering on agony. The air too was one Owen knew she loved; and such dulcet strains none else could surely pour on the soft ear of night; she started up, and bounded towards the figure; but it was fled, like some fair vision that fancy conjures up, passing on night's shadow; and she began to really imagine the groves were peopled by those aërial forms Beatrice assured her haunted the adjoining woods.

Elwyna, with timid looks and hesitating voice, proposed to the stranger-knight, and his gentle sister, returning to the castle. The herald's trumpet in shrill sound summoned each goodly guest to the tilt yard, where seats were erected for the visitors to witness the chivalrous prowess of the valiant knights, who had desired a tourney for the ladies' entertainment.

Now did Elwyna's heart beat quick with hope, as she surveyed, with anxious and impatient eyes, each noble knight entering the tilt yard. For, by the herald's trumpet, it was proclaimed, to whomsoever the victory was adjudged, the fair hand of the Lady Elwyna Mortimer should be the prize obtained.

Several were the gallant knights who were mounted on richly caparisoned steeds, clad in glittering armour, with towering plumes, and banners waving high, that proudly advanced within the lists.

Sir Roger Mortimer, with a train of

nobles and esquires, took his seat in centre of the throng ; and as he placed his trembling daughter by his side, he said to her, in a commanding voice, " The valiant knight who by his prowess wins the hand of my Elwyna, she shall wed this eve, before the setting sun. His name, his rank, I'll not enquire — for, on my faith, I pledge myself, his prowess shall content me—for the one o'erthrown, I shall deem unworthy to wear so precious a jewel next his heart as Elwyna Mortimer."

The shrill note of the herald sounded for combat.

A knight came forth within the ring clad in sable armour, interlaced with burnished gold. His helmet was surmounted with a raven plume, mixed with wild red feathers. His fiery steed, black as his armour, rushed with impetuous swiftness towards the knight he challenged.

The knight of sable hue, though fierce in combat, proved so skilled in arms, he

soon o'erthrew his opponent; yet he was no weak combatant. But the hand of blood outstretched upon his shield, seemed emblematic of sanguinary deeds, and a sanguinary mind.

Several competitors for the fair Elwyna's hand advanced with boldness, and were as severally overthrown: nor could Elwyna guess, so cased in armour were they, with their visors closed, whom they each might be: yet it was plain that Owen came not. Was he then so cold, so backward, after his proffered vows of constancy, in a cause wherein his prowess was so sure to win her? Did he then dread to meet in single combat the proud Earl Warren? Had he not once o'erthrown that mighty tyrant? To re-conquer, sure, was an easy task — where love gives strength to hope, and might have "nerved his arm with superhuman firmness."

One more round alone remained to fix Elwyna's destiny for ever, with the sable knight — and who dared now contend

with one whose arm invincible, shivered the lance of all who ventured in contest with him ?

With exulting triumph, the sable knight received the shout of victory, which sounded in loud acclamations from the assembled company.

A mute and solemn pause ensued ; when, within the lists, a knight rushed forward, mounted on a milk-white steed ; and proudly he bore his rider.

This unpretending knight had no armorial bearings, nor device upon his shield. But on his blue and silken banner, in golden letters, was interwoven the motto, "*Justice will prevail.*" With right bold arm the sable knight rushed firmly on, and never was a contest more manfully and ably sustained.

At length, the victory was awarded to the sable knight, who, though once o'erthrown, twice o'erthrew his luckless adversary. With shivered lance, he was borne from the tilt-yard, and the tourney ended.

The victor now advanced to where Elwyna sat, and with a courteous obeisance, prostrated himself before her. He spake not, nor did he raise his visor; but pressing her unwilling hand, he put a ring upon her finger, whereon was mounted a jasper, ingeniously formed into the figure of a dog, encircled by the motto, — “*Faithful to the end.*”

When Elwyna beheld the precious stone so modelled, she trembled and changed colour. This was, indeed, the touchstone to Elwyna's love.

Was Owen, then, this sable knight with raven plume, who came in such “*a questionable shape*,” and whose arm invincible had defeated even the most valiant? The knight of simple guise, who used no borrowed aid of splendour, but rather seemed to scorn all pageantry, though foiled, had so borne himself with grace and valour, Elwyna's ever-watchful eye had in fancy pictured him Owen, but

she now surmised was the lovely Margurette's gallant brother.

Perplexed, distressed, Elwyna knew not why, alternate hope and fear oppressed her bosom. She gazed upon the ring with curious eye, for none knew, except Owen and herself, the motto and device ; therefore fraud seemed to be here impossible. It was a spell that bound them to each other ; a watch word, that could not pass current.

" If you be Owen," said she, in timid apprehension, " I pray you, Sir Knight, raise your visor." No answer was returned, but her hand with fervency was pressed, as he gallantly led her from the assembled multitude.

" Noble Knight," cried Sir Roger Mortimer, as he graciously saluted him, " you have done valiantly ; you have fairly won my daughter. Wear her at your heart's core ; love and cherish her ; for the lovely Elwyna Mortimer shall be yours, before the sun doth sink below yon bright horizon."

“ On this instant,” he continued, “ we will away to the holy chapel, father Cluny shall join your hands; after which, feast and minstrelsy shall close the joyous evening.”

“ Know you this courteous knight, my father ? ” said Elwyna, with an anxious voice and look.

“ Of you, my child, he replied, in a complacent manner, “ rather ought I to ask the question ; for, if I guess rightly, from this peerless knight, you have but now received a pledge of love, that cannot be mistaken.”

“ But,” Sir Roger added, “ I will not press you closely ; for, have I not said, of his name, his lineage, I shall not inquire, if by his prowess he won my daughter. Nor will I be forsworn; even did the knightly guise, when thrown aside, unveil the person of the stripling Owen.”

With curious and watchful scrutiny, Elyna surveyed the figure of the sable knight, as he led her through the gallery,

Though the crimson mantle which enveloped him, partially concealed his person, there was a firmness in his step, an air of martial consequence, Elwyna fancied did not belong to the youthful Owen. The person too of the sable knight appeared to be something taller ; yet the helmet, with a plume so towering, might deceive her.

That he spake not, prudence might suggest ; for did the voice betray the person of Owen, if it was really him, on that instant, perhaps, her father would recant his promise, and she be torn from his arms for ever.

“Has not,” said Elwyna mentally, “the ring, that tender pledge of love, but just received, averred him *faithful to the end* ? Whence, then,” she said, with renewed confidence, “such rising doubts, such dread alarm ? This silly weakness is unworthy a place in Elwyna’s bosom. To doubt of Owen’s honour, is to doubt his love.”

The shade of sadness and distrust, which so recently had overspread Elwyna's radiant countenance, in an instant passed away, and was succeeded by an enchanting smile which played round her beautiful mouth ; while her eyes diffused an expression of happiness, which gave a brilliancy and gaiety to every feature. Her dignified and graceful figure, bent with a mingled expression of tenderness and respect towards the knight, as he conducted her into the chapel.

Trembling with emotion, Elwyna passed through the folding doors, which terminating one end of the long and stately gallery, led into the chapel.

She was followed by a train of knights, esquires, noble ladies, and young maidens, to be witness of the solemn ceremony.

The chapel, an ancient structure, was gaily and richly decorated for the occasion ; the heavy gloomy interior, forming a singular contrast with the gaudy trappings of flowers, embroidery, and

those tawdry ornaments, which decorate the Catholic sanctuaries. On the altar stood enormous golden candlesticks, containing tall blazing tapers; wreaths of various flowers, hung in fantastic irregularity above the altar, and on the ancient tapestry, with which the walls were partially covered. Several scriptural paintings, executed by the most eminent artists, filled the otherwise vacant spaces; and between the arcades, which ran along the aisle of the building, waved innumerable banners, the proud trophy of many a hero, who now slept in the dust.

On the long narrow windows were emblazoned grotesque figures, intended to be emblematic of scriptural subjects, badly executed in gaudy colouring; but which, however, so far excluded the light, as to cast a sombre and partial shade into the chapel. There were a few monuments, heavily sculptured in marble.

The solemn ceremony began. From

the golden censers rolled clouds of frankincense, as they were tossed aloft, while, in loud peals, the organ swelled to the choral anthem, from a multitude of voices, which ascended in divine and impressive melody, responding to each other; whilst the priest, in his gaudy embroidered robe, went through his sacred function. With surprise, Elyna remarked that it was not father Alselmo, but a stranger, who performed the solemn ceremony. Why he had withdrawn himself on this important occasion was past all conjecture; except it was her father's will, for she knew that he disliked Alselmo.

There was an eye, however, that with such mournful, yet stern expression gazed upon her; she shrank appalled beneath the lightning glance, and fell almost prostrate on the altar steps, when a groan, that pierced her very soul, issued from the bosom of the stranger-knight, who, though he wore his visor closed, she knew to be the same that, mounted on the milk-

white steed, had borne himself so ably in the contest.

Much did his shadowy form, at intervals distinctly seen emerging from the column where he had placed himself, disturb her. His eye shot fire, as with wild phrenzy it seemed to menace destruction to the sable knight, who saw not, or would not see, this bold and fearless person.

The ceremony ended.—Elwyna's destiny was fixed for ever, and the sacred bond of wedlock pronounced her the wife, not of *Owen*, but *Earl Warren*!

He raised his visor to salute her: Elwyna recoiled with horror, and when he clasped her to his breast; she gave a frantic shriek, and fell lifeless at his feet.

All now within the chapel became tumult and confusion. The women crowded round Elwyna, while the priest and choristers stood in mute silence, crossing themselves.

While Earl Warren bent over his faint.

ing consort, Owen wildly rushed forth, and snatching Elwyna's drooping hand, in soft and tender accents, addressed her, nor heeded his overbearing rival.

Sir Roger Mortimer now interposed. "We have foiled you methinks, Owen," he said, with an air of proud exultation. "But it is fairly ; my Lord of Warren has deserved and won the Lady."

"You are Elwyna's father," returned Owen, endeavouring to suppress his rising indignation ; "would you were not, then, should this arm, Sir Knight, challenge you to single combat. That in the tourney I have been foiled, is most true ; for as an adventurous knight, I came on equal ground with my Lord of Warren, and that I am his equal, he shall learn before to-morrow's sun-rise. Some foul device has now been practised to ensnare your daughter ; for I will pledge my life never else would she have bestowed her hand upon Earl Warren. The proud Lord shall have cause to rue

this nuptial day, He is, and has ever been, a base usurper."

"Within these sacred walls," continued Owen, "I will not seek redress, nor parley with him. This is no place to war in: but when next we meet, let my Lord of Warren tremble, for he has an account most fearful to give in."

"You speak boldly," replied the knight, in a tone of defiance; "have a care, for there are certain dungeons within these castle walls, that may prove, young man, your future prison-house; therefore I warn you have a care."

"Aye," and there is a stream, Sir Knight," returned Owen, fixing his penetrating eye upon Elwyna's father, "that flows round Holt castle, whose floodgates were let loose in vain."

"But to that piteous tale, we will revert hereafter," added Owen; again steadfastly regarding Sir Roger Mortimer.

Conscience-stung, the knight looked deadly pale — grew sick at heart, and

staggered to one of the pillars for support.

Meanwhile Elwyna had been carried to a window in the gallery for air.

When she recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen, it was only to an acute sense of wretchedness she was restored. She had now reached the very summit of misery. The fatal knot was tied, which death alone could sever. She had been entrapped by her own credulity, and by the most singular fatality. John, Earl of Warren, was no usurper of the name of *John*, for it was the same which Owen also bore, as well Elwyna knew, though, from certain causes, it was suppressed, and in the castle he was only designated by that of Owen. The monster, too, who called her his, was his deadly foe ; as was, alas ! her father.

A thunder-bolt seemed to have fallen on her brain, so stupified was every faculty ; and when she turned to the recollection of the fatal ceremony that

just had passed, she was quite bewildered and oppressed with the weight of her misfortunes.

Earl Warren, who had left Elwyna to the care of Beatrice, and her attendants, now returned, gorgeously arrayed in bridal vestments.

In passive silence, Elwyna suffered him to support her (for her limbs were powerless to walk) into the banqueting room, where the guests were already assembled. Elwyna's eyes shone with an unnatural lustrous expression, as they wandered, with wild and rapid motion, in search of some object she appeared to miss, and sought in vain. Her brow was clouded with care, and her cheeks flushed with a deep crimson, which formed a singular contrast to her colourless and quivering lips.

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* * * *

Sir Roger Mortimer, on recovering his self-possession, repaired to the hall, to preside at the entertainment.

Through the centre of this large gloomy room, intended for the scene of mirth and festivity, was spread a long table, the top furnished with a *dais*, or elevated upper end. At this table, sat in three high backed chairs, composed of oak, richly carved, and raised above the rest, Sir Roger Mortimer, the bride, and bridegroom. The other part of the table was filled with a noble company of knights and ladies.

The banqueting room was lighted with wax, in candelabras of massive silver.

Another table crossed the hall, where were placed the inferior guests.

The walls were hung with various implements of war and the chase.

The lofty roof was crossed with beams, and the wide chimney-piece, adorned with various cut stone, bearing the arms of the house and its alliances.

The repast consisted of deer, kids, all sorts of wild fowl, barons of beef, a variety of fish and confectionary, of every kind ; also the choicest fruits. Beside the higher orders of the company, was placed a goblet of silver.

At the table of the inferior guests sat a palmer, a pilgrim, and a minstrel boy. They all, in a posture of fixed and mute attention, viewed the bride and bridegroom, with an impatient and enquiring eye. They did not partake of the banquet, nor seem to enter into the festivity of the scene ; but, every now and then, spoke in whispers to each other ; and, with pointed gestures, looked with fixed eyes towards the upper table.

From the gallery sounded the harp in lively melody, to the accompaniment of the following words, from the Welsh air,

Eroldigan Caer Waun..

In Cambrian's noon of story,
 Ere bright she sat in glory,
 The brave and great
 In princely state,
 All hail'd Gwayn castle walls :
 With splendid arms returning,
 In the flaring noon-beams burning,
 'Mid armours clang
 The clarions rang
 And search'd the sounding halls.
 Rich fruits profuse the garnish'd tables crown'd,
 Where the chords of flashing fire loud flourish'd
 pealings rung ;
 Gay banners wav'd the trophied walls around,
 And high with heart-felt roar the grand carousal
 rung.

DOVASTON.

Sir Roger Mortimer gave the health of
 Earl Warren, and his fair consort. The
 steward of the household held the golden
 cup, which he was in the act of presenting,
 after the flourish of trumpets, when Earl
 Warren desired to give the toast *Iechyd*
y nehbren-y ty — or, the *upper beam of*
the house ; when the master's health was
 drank.

On the instant that the toast was given, the pilgrim started from his seat, and rushing towards the *dais*, displaced Sir Roger Mortimer with supernatural force: he threw his cloak aside, and casting off his hat, in an attitude of bold and stern command, he said to the astonished and dismayed company, in a voice of thunder, "To *me* you are to direct your toast, not to Sir Roger Mortimer, for I am the *upper beam*; I am the master of this house."

Every eye was turned on the pilgrim, with one accord—every goblet held untouched.

"My name is *Madoc ap Gryffydd*," he continued, in a tone of bold authority, "son of Llewelyn and Emma ap Gryffydd. In yon minstrel's garb, stands my brother, the youth Owen, as he is called; but he is nobly named *Llewelyn*."

"These proud usurpers, my Lord of Warren, and Sir Roger Mortimer, dare not," added he with an air of defiance, "forswear themselves."

“ Noble knights, esquires ;” he proceeded, with a look and gesture that made Earl Warren and Sir Roger tremble ; “ if ye will listen to a deed of horror, know, that on a night, now twenty years ago, beneath that impetuous stream that flows round Holt castle, we, then infant boys, were precipitated by these fell murderers. But a gracious arm was sent to save us.”

“ Stand forth,” pointing to the palmer, “ venerable Alselmo ; and, by the holy cross you wear, bear testimony to the truth of what I utter. You know full well, it was your blessed arm that saved us ; when, unheedful of all danger, you plunged into the rapid Dee, and bore us safe to shore.”

“ But the tale is long,” he added, “ and it were tedious to relate each circumstance.”

All eyes were again fixed on the perpetrators of the cruel deed ; and every guest arose in consternation and dismay :

none had spoken during the dread and solemn pause, except the pilgrim.

He ceased.

Earl Warren now came forward. — Hitherto astonishment, and that inward monitor *conscience*, had tied his tongue. But thus to be accused, arraigned in this large assembly, was what his haughty spirit could no longer brook.

With a resolution, therefore, bold and fearless, stamping his foot, he exclaimed, “Peace, madman!” Then turning almost frantic with rage to the assembled guests, added, “You perceive how wild the creature talks—how incoherent is his subject. This maniac has escaped from his prison-house; where for countless years, he has been confined within the woods of Haldon.”

“True, my Lord of Warren,” interrupted Madoc, not to be daunted, and sternly advancing, “I have been crazed—and well I might, with deeds so cruel, that have been practised on me to touch

my brain. But it is not wildly now I talk; for Madoc ap Gryffydd is no usurper here. This castle is my birth-right — my just inheritance; I will not yield it up but with my life.”

“No!” continued he, “not even to that sweet and blighted rose-bud,” (gazing with tender compassion upon Elwynna). “But she will perish when grafted on so rude a stem: that form so delicate, so tender, must fade and die beneath a tyrant’s grasp. But she will be transplanted to a happier soil, and shine a white and blessed star, in that celestial sphere where joy is never ending.”

In those dark ages, even the most enlightened minds were tinctured with superstition. The prediction, therefore, which Madoc breathed of Elwynna’s future destiny, struck the guests with horror. He had long been called the *Owenyddion*, or prophet; and was the terror of all the villagers around Haldon woods. If he was not mad, he seemed to resemble the

highlander, in the perception of second sight, foreboding melancholy events.

Elwyna listened to his prediction without apprehension. Death would to her prove most welcome, and a happy repose from suffering.

Sir Roger Mortimer, weak and cowardly in mind, though by nature designing, wary, cunning; was overcome with fear, and had shrunk aside, beneath the fiery glance of Madoc's piercing eye, and stood irresolute and silent.

That Madoc lived he knew; but that this creature of the woods, so wild, so terrible, should prove to be the infant boy, his avarice and ambition had sought to hurry into a watery and untimely grave; and his own eye had beheld plunged into the merciless waves; seemed past all possible conjecture.

The youth Owen too! By what extraordinary device had he, from childhood, been admitted within the castle walls; and, like the shadowy form of

some dreadful spectre, had long disturbed his nightly slumbers, and his waking visions ?

“Owen, or rather Llewelyn, draw near,” cried Madoc, with stern command. “Shrink not, young man, beneath the eye of those who would usurp your rights ; and who so long have robbed us of those vast possessions that cannot purchase peace. Look you,” he continued ; “regard their haggard eye, their trembling frame. Look on that beauteous flower,” pointing to Elwyna ; “that fair and drooping lily, which yon proud lordling has torn from its loving mate, and has transplanted into his own ambitious bosom.”

“Lady,” turning to the sinking bride, “you have been basely tricked into a vile marriage. The sacred priest that joined your hands, has profaned himself.”

“In truth,” returned Elwyna faintly, “my own credulity has destroyed me ; and my destiny is without remedy.”

“What means,” interrupted Earl Warren, in a voice of thunder, “all this idle parleying? This raving madman, with unlicensed freedom, has broke in upon our wedding banquet, our evening revels — and struck with panic, it should seem, this goodly company.”

“Shame on you! Sir Roger Mortimer,” he added, in an angry and reproachful tone, “not more cheerily to entertain your noble guests. Again we will drink, my friends, *“To the upper beam of the house,”* for I know none other, except this courteous knight.”

Father Alselmo now, beneath the habit of a holy palmer, with lowly reverence, stood before Earl Warren.

“It may ill become me, my Lord of Warren,” he said, in a firm, yet mild voice, “to dispute the health you propose should be drank. But while Madoc and Owen live, there can be none other *upper beam* but them, to Holt and Gwayn castle.”

“Listen,” he proceeded, (addressing the mute and astonished company,) “to an old man’s story; for, by the holy cross I wear, and by the saint at whose shrine I bow, I do solemnly protest it was the blessed St. Winifred who saved them from a watery grave into which, my Lord of Warren, and Sir Roger Mortimer, would have precipitated them.

“It can be no matter of wonder, that the reason of Madoc, the elder brother, should at times be affected. His brain was injured by the rock, from whence, ye merciless men, had hurled him. Oh! it was a barbarous act! So young, so innocent were these two sweet blooming boys; whose smiling, guileless faces, might have turned the hearts of those who purposed to destroy them. The child Owen escaped unhurt.”

“It was I,” Alselmo continued, “who brought him hither. It was I who proved the tender nursling of his infant years; and as he grew to manhood, beneath the

humble guise of a poor minstrel boy, under my tutorage, he grew to what you see him ; bearing those years of ripened manhood, which gives him claim to all these wide possessions."

"And you would tell us," interrupted Earl Warren, with a scornful laugh, "that this boy, this stripling, is the noble chieftain, Madoc's son ; whose widowed consort was wedded to Sir Roger Mortimer."

"Go to your prayers," he added with a reproachful taunt ; "in penitence and penance, sinful old man, try to wipe away the fatal stain of such atrocious falsehood."

The solemn asseveration of father Alselmo struck the assembled guests with horror and amazement. The table became a scene of instant confusion, and all appearance of mirth and festivity ceased.

The lady Elwyna had fainted ; while Sir Roger Mortimer, panic struck, was

dumb. He dared not contradict the truth of what the reverend father had affirmed. He knew the facts, and not quite hardened, like Earl Warren, in iniquity, he gladly would have bartered all his wealth, so ill acquired, for peace of mind.

The gallant Sir Humphrey Beauchamp had risen ; and, with his gentle sister, hung over the drooping bride.

The powerful attack which Madoc and Father Alselmo had made upon Earl Warren, chased, for the time, even the fair Elwyna from his thoughts.

“ What proof bring you forward,” he exclaimed with proud defiance, “ to identify these men ? ”

“ Look at that heir-loom,” returned Madoc, boldly advancing, “ that glitters on the brow of yon beauteous maiden,” (pointing to Elwyna); “ those precious gems that form the wreath well do you know, my Lord of Warren; for they once adorned my mother; and, as I have heard

the holy father say, they were given for some signal deed of valour by our monarch, to the mighty chieftain, Madoc ap Gryffydd."

"The garland then is mine!" Madoc exclaimed with vehemence; "and mine shall be the gift." With wild and furious gesture, he sprang forward, and with outstretched hands, attempted to displace the glittering jewels.

Earl Warren drew his dagger, and, with wrathful malice, pointed at the breast of Madoc.

Madoc was also armed. He drew a poinard from his belt, and, with an eye of flame, boldly challenged Earl Warren to combat.

Sir Humphrey Beauchamp interposed.

"My Lord of Warren," said he, with a mild, but commanding voice, "restore, I pray you, to Madoc and to Owen, the noble chieftain's sons, their birth-right and inheritance. To retain possessions to which they bear a lawful claim, dishonor

not yourself alone, but dishonor your fair bride, such unjust proceedings."

"Defend yourself, my Lord of Warren," cried Madoc, eager for the contest, and not to be repulsed; "for by the noble blood which flows within these veins, I will be revenged, or have that garland."

Elwyna, now restored to animation, with alarm, beheld the threatened contest. To her, the gems were valueless; and she tore the glittering roses that mingled with her silken ringlets from her head; and, presenting them to Sir Humphrey Beauchamp, requested him to give the wreath to Madoc.

When Owen beheld the frantic gestures of his brother, the fire that started from his eyes, his angry brow, and the burning glow of crimson that flushed his cheek, as, like a hungry tiger, Earl Warren darted on his brother; he rushed between them, and parried off the blow he aimed.

"Not on Madoc," cried the brave in-

trepid Owen, "but on me, my Lord of Warren, wreak your vengeance; I challenge you to combat; it is our blood you still thirst for it should seem, and that alone will satisfy your sanguinary mind. But, by my right to this castle, and by the tender love I bear Elwyna, I challenge you to combat."

"My father's memory," he added, with modest confidence, "will nerve my arm. His gallant spirit will aid my cause; and the noble name I bear, not of Owen, but *Llewelyn*, will give vigour to my sword, and shiver yours to atoms. Come on then, proud Lord — for it is in a noble cause I fight; and *Justice will prevail*."

Terrible and fearful became the contest, for Madoc would not be repulsed. The phrenzy of his brain seemed to give him supernatural strength; with violence he drove his brother aside, that he might not be foiled.

Earl Warren fought with skill, for he was well skilled in arms. Madoc knew

little of their use ; but while he dextrously parried each attack, his adversary meant as deadly, Madoc, with that cunning and foresight often the accompaniment of madness, sought a favourable moment for revenge, and laid Earl Warren with a death wound at his feet.

Still Earl Warren fought ; and though Madoc's blood stained his wedding vestments, it satiated not his vengeance ; but with feeble and uplifted arm he grappled with Owen, and plunged the dagger, yet red with Madoc's blood, into his body. Only slightly wounded, the brave Llewelyn soon avenged his cause ; and the ebbing life of Earl Warren hastened to a close by the last blow received from Llewelyn's hand. The terrible cry of murder resounded throughout the hall. The women fled in horror and dismay. Sir Roger Mortimer, during the dreadful contest, came forward ; and in vain endeavoured to stop the threatened effusion of blood. When he beheld Earl Warren

dying at his feet, he commanded that Madoc and his brother should be immediately conveyed as prisoners to the dungeon in the castle.*

Sir Humphrey Beauchamp and several other knights, with manly and determined spirit, interposed.

“At your peril, Sir Roger Mortimer,” said Sir Humphrey, “send them captives hence. This important cause must be adjudged by higher power. We will appeal to that of our gracious monarch. On the faith of a true knight I protest, when the history of the noble chieftains is brought to light, and each circumstance revealed, for which you will be solemnly arraigned, you will be outlawed and disgraced. At your peril, therefore, I repeat, detain them in bondage here.”

The guilty are ever cowards. Sir

* The dungeon, descended to by a flight of steps, is still to be seen in Kirk Castle.

Roger Mortimer, irresolute and disarmed by the scene of death and bloodshed he beheld, had not courage to execute his threat, and suffered Madoc and Llewelyn to be released.

What a wedding festival on this his daughter's natal day — whom he had deceived, ensnared, and sacrificed ! He shrunk abashed and guilty from the universal gaze, self-condemned.

The voice of joy and merriment was now converted into the groans of the dying ; the song of the minstrel, into shrieks of terror. Music and dancing had ceased ; the revellers in the parks had fled from their sports, and all was confusion, horror, and affright.

Sir Roger Mortimer approached his dying friend. He turned his eyes upon him with ghastly stare ; and as the knight viewed his haggard and disfigured countenance, he recoiled with horror, and would have fled, but Earl Warren feebly murmured Elwyna's name, and endeav-

voured to extend his arms towards her. Sir Roger instantly took his daughter's hand, and led her sinking as she was with terror to her expiring husband.

When Elwyna beheld the proud so fallen, and perceived that soon he must be numbered with the dead, the tenderest compassion was awakened in her bosom; and she was deeply touched with his sad condition, when she saw him writhing with agony on the ground, from whence he would not suffer himself to be lifted. With supernatural force he grasped the terrified Elwyna to his breast; and, with a ghastly and malignant look, he cried, "Swear that you will not wed Owen, then shall I die in peace."

Elwyna, frightened at the menacing expression of his glaring eyes, while the damps of death spread over his face and stood upon his darkened brow, was unable to speak. She tried in vain to loosen the hold which he had taken of her; and grasped her still closer, as he said, in a

low sullen voice, "Then you will not give me that consolation, you will not swear."

"I cannot," she faintly articulated, "but from my soul I forgive the deceit you practised, and shall think of it no more."

"One parting kiss then," he feebly murmured, "of peace and pardon ; that at least you will not refuse me."

Elwyna bent in pity to the dying man, and touched his parched and quivering lip ; when at the instant with the dagger that lay beside him, he attempted to plunge it into her breast. Happily his arm was powerless—the nerve of strength was gone, and with a groan that sent its hideous echo through the hall, Earl Warren's soul took its awful flight to worlds unknown.

Llewelyn, though not much wounded, had been removed from the scene of death and horror, by order of the gallant Sir Humphrey Beauchamp ; and was attended by Father Alselmo, who had some skill

in surgery, and was acquainted with those balsamic herbs, that form an efficacious emollient for hurts and wounds.

Madoc, regardless of his own condition, firmly resisted the importunity of Sir Humphrey Beauchamp and Father Alselmo to retire; for he had slipped from his brother's room and again entered the hall, determined to wreak his fury on Earl Warren. It was, however, fully satiated, when he beheld the life just flitting from him. But when he crushed him, it was without remorse; and as a man would slay in self-defence the merciless tiger that purposed to destroy him.

“Ah! is he then dead!” cried Madoc, with a convulsive shudder, as he viewed the motionless body of Earl Warren stretched upon the ground. “Is the proud usurper gone to retribution? So ends all his greatness here, in empty nothingness — in the dark silence of the grave.”

“Behold,” he continued, “his wedding garments become a winding sheet. His bridal merriments changed into groans and lamentations, to quit this scene of splendour for that unknown country, from whose bourne no traveller returns.’ Where is his bride?” (looking for Elwyna, whom he missed) “that tender drooping flower; the sweet Elwyna — now will her beauty blossom beneath a genial soil — her joy will be unclouded — Llewelyn will be happy — no rival more shall step between to interrupt their bliss.”

“Whilst Madoc,” he added, as the hot tear coursed down his rugged cheek, “an isolated creature, with a brain so seared that none can heal it, will retire to some solitary cabin, there to die, unloved, uncherished! Perhaps a tear of pity may bedew my grave, and a funeral emblem of affection be planted by Llewelyn and the sweet Elwyna on that silent spot.”

He ceased. In silent contemplation he stood with folded arms over Earl

Warren's body, absorbed in thoughtful gloom, until some persons came to remove it, when Madoc started away ; and the hall shortly after was vacanted by all the late assembled guests.

The distressed, afflicted, Elwyna had been torn from her dying husband by Sir Gilbert Herbert, the knight who had always shown Llewelyn such partial favor in the days of childhood and obscurity, until now. The base attempt upon her life, from a man on the very borders of eternity, made human nature shudder and recoil, as a deed too shocking to conceive ; and this act filled up the completion of the awful and mighty tragedy of the day.

The gentle Lady Margurette Beauchamp was led by her brother to one of the distant apartments in the castle, to which the other ladies had been conducted, who were present at the banquet when the cry of murder issued throughout the hall.

Elwyna, although in her father's castle, deemed it no place of peace and safety. When she was visited by Father Alselmo, she entreated him to give her safe conduct to Wenlock Abbey, where she might taste repose with the holy mother and the pious sisters. In that sequestered sanctuary, she would find refuge from the turbulence and wickedness of the world.

"Daughter," replied the meek Alselmo, "I will conduct you thither. You judge wisely — within that hallowed sanctuary you will be shielded from this vain world of sinfulness and error. Awful is the lesson you have learned to-day, in the mad ambition of that worldly-minded man — and awful has been his exit!"

"Said you, that Earl Warren is dead?" said Elwyna, starting from her couch, and with a look of doubtful earnestness, regarded Alselmo. "Wretched man!" she added, with a convulsive shudder, "thus to be precipitated into eternity."

"We will pray for his soul, my daugh-

ter," interrupted Alselmo, elevating with solemn piety his hands and eyes. "We will pray for its passage through the shades of night, into eternity, for he had none to shrive him."

The holy father, with pious fervour, said a short mass for the departed; and then bestowed a benediction on Elwyna, and prayer of comfort and consolation.

"Be ready, daughter," he said, "within an hour, and I will attend you. I will procure two horses from the stables, and while present confusion in the castle favours our departure, we shall not be missed."

"But tell me, good father," said she, with tender enquiry, "where is Llewelyn, How doth he? — may I not see him ere I go? Breathe one little wish of comfort to him — say, we may yet perhaps be happy."

"It were far better not to see him; indeed, it must not be. Delay is dangerous; and, if you loose the present moment, I

cannot promise for your future safety. Llewelyn is well cared for by the kind humane Sir Humphrey Beauchamp; his wounds are healing. Rest then in peace, my daughter, and all may yet be well. Not even Beatrice must be the companion of your flight; for she is weak in mind, and her tears and murmurings might betray you. In an hour," he added, "I shall expect to meet you at the outer gate."

Whilst Elwyna was preparing for her departure, Alseldo visited the wounded Llewelyn. He had been conveyed to the turret chamber which he occupied in the castle. He communicated to him, by Elwyna's desire, her intention of taking refuge for the present in the monastery at Wenlock. He approved the plan; for, at Gwayn, he foresaw only a scene of contention and reproach from a father, who had so basely sacrificed his daughter's happiness to a tyrant and a villain.

Llewelyn entreated Father Alseldo to be speedy in conveying her away.

“Assure the sweet — the injured Elwyna,” he added, “that to know she is safe from danger, will accelerate my recovery, and restore peace to my wounded mind. Say, too, that I hope the period will yet arrive, when Llewelyn may be permitted to assure her of his unaltered love. To ask that hand, which, although so basely bestowed upon another, he considers as plighted to himself. Now that Elwyna is free, Llewelyn demands the gift that once was pledged; and, without which, riches, titles, honors, avail as naught; when put in competition with a treasure so precious as herself.”

* * * * *

With a sick and heavy heart, Elwyna joined Father Alselmo at the outer gate of the castle. They passed without observation into the park; for the throng of persons passing and repassing, since the late scene of bloodshed and confusion,

rendered them free of detection. Alselmo again put on his palmer's habit; and Elwyna, wrapt in a large cloak and hood, mounted their horses, and soon were beyond the lights from the castle and the sound of the voices of the people.

The body of Earl Warren was covered with his cloak, and conveyed to one of the remote chambers.

Sir Roger Mortimer, overpowered with the contending emotions that rose within his breast, dared not look back on the past; dared not contemplate the future. He was disappointed, disgraced, detected; and, in all probability, would be arraigned for his life as a usurper of riches and honors, to which he claimed no right.

He withdrew, not to his couch, but took instant flight to Abbey Valle Crucis*;

* Abbey Valle Crucis; most of these houses were founded by an injunction from the popes, by way of penances for the great lords of those times, for what the holy church judged infringements of her prerogative; for some crimes which these fathers

there, in penance and confession, to shelter himself from the rigour of that law, which, in trembling apprehension, he expected would lay hold upon him. He thought not of his hapless daughter: ever selfish and unfeeling, self-security was what alone he sought. He knew that proffered wealth would purchase masses, and he despaired not of final absolution.

Sir Humphrey Beauchamp remained that night at the castle. In the morning, after leaving his sister at Rhyadden castle, he proceeded on his way to London; there to represent the lawful claims of Madoc and Llewelyn to the

of the church well knew how to avail themselves. — *Grosses' Antiquities.*

This abbey, acknowledged to be the finest remains of antiquity in North Wales, was founded by Madawc ap Gryffiths Maylor, Prince of Powis, about 1200, for Cestertians, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary, with a revenue of 188*l.* per annum; but, since its dissolution, appropriated to the tithes of Wrexham and Llangollen. — *Beauties of England and Wales.*

estates of Holt and Gwayn castles. He would have made Father Alselmo the companion of his journey, that he might have borne testimony to the truth of this tragic tale, but the holy father was not to be found. It was supposed that he had gone on some pilgrimage, for often he absented himself on some pious errand.

Madoc, after witnessing the fatal termination to the tragedy in which he had borne a part so powerful, retired to his own desolate little hovel in Haldon woods, there to meditate the past events, and to rest his burning brain on his humble pallet.

* * * * *

Many pages of the manuscript were here entirely lost ; and my eager curiosity to learn the termination of this romantic tale, was only gratified at the following part, with which this extraordinary history concluded.

Elwyna, who had found a secure and peaceful asylum in Wenlock monastery, took leave of the abbess and the pious nuns with sentiments of gratitude, and feelings of regret. But Elwyna's heart bounded with the opening prospect of felicity which she never again expected to taste.

Llewelyn ap Gryffydd claimed her formerly plighted hand. He was no longer the outcast of fortune. The son of a noble and powerful chieftain — he laid claim to all those wide possessions which his monarch had awarded to him.

Though Elwyna knew it was but just that her father should resign those lands which, with Earl Warren, he so unjustly had usurped; yet she was sorely pained; he was her father, who so humbly sunk debased beneath the sad disgrace which his proud ambition had drawn down upon him. Even that felicity, of which she had so pure a foretaste in her union with

Llewelyn, received a shade that overcast her brightest prospects.

Llewelyn, generous as noble, considerate as humane, saw all the tender struggle in Elwyna's bosom; and that filial love, which all the vice and cruelty of her father could not annihilate.

"When I am blest," he fondly said, "with my Elwyna's love, when I call her mine, no remembrance of former sorrows shall be revived. Gwayn castle I will resign to Sir Roger Mortimer during his life — and on the high-crowned hill of Castle Dinas Brân, we will take up our dwelling. My father," added Llewelyn, with tearful recollection, "loved that castle. Thence, looking down upon the pastoral vallies watered by the silver-flowing Dee, which takes its course in a thousand wild and beautiful meanderings, we will in that feudal castle celebrate our wedding festival.

"Ah! how different," he continued, "my loved Elwyna, from that other

wedding-day ! Peace and happiness shall crown with joy our day — no scenes of blood shall strike horror in each bosom — no dissonant death-song shall yell its raven notes in our ears — all will be gladness, chastened mirth, and sweet serenity !

“ The lofty chain of mountains,” proceeded Llewelyn, “ which forms a barrier between us and Gwayn, will shut it from our sight, and our remembrance. In the lovely peaceful valley of Llangollen, which we look down upon in towering majesty from Castle Dinas Brân, we shall contemplate in all her robe of verdant beauty, decked in a thousand brilliant flowers, and graced with all that train of sylvan loveliness that soothes the spirits, and whispers peace and happiness ! ”

This enchanting picture, painted in all the vivid colouring of youthful enthusiasm, brought tears of gratitude and thankfulness into Elwyna's eyes. She ten-

derly pressed Llewelyn's hand, but could not speak.

* * * * *

Several pages are here again defaced.

* * * * *

Madoc's heart was full. His beating brain could not support the joyful scene of happiness. His nerves, too finely strung, gave way. He saw Alselmo join their hands. He heard the solemn ceremony that made Llewelyn and Elwyna one — but when it ended, the dreadful pressure on his head proved fatal; and he dropped a statue at their feet!

* * * * *

Sir Roger Mortimer fell a victim to the austerities which he practised in Valle Crucis. He was found dead on

the stony pillow which he had made his place of rest.

* * * * *

It was not until long after years, that Gwayn castle again became inhabited. Llewelyn ap Gryffydd and Elwyna made Castle Dinas Brân their constant residence.

To their children they taught forbearance and humility. And their bright example, their goodness and their virtues, descended to future generations in their offspring. They had purchased happiness too dearly, not to justly estimate so choice a blessing. Even in their hours of purest bliss, the mournful recollection of the past made them feel, with humble gratitude, that the chastening hand of Providence is necessary to correct the frailty and presumption of his erring creatures.

* * * * *

The end of the manuscript.

THE extraordinary events detailed in the manuscript I had just finished, left a degree of melancholy for some hours afterwards on my spirits I found it impossible to dispel. The characters therein contained I should like to have conversed upon with Miss Griffiths, and heard her remarks on their various destinies: but she, of all persons, was the last to whom I could unfold my opinion without disguise: for, it appeared, that she was lineally descended from Llewelyn ap Gryffydd and Elwyna. No wonder, then, that she inherited those fine qualities for which they had been so eminently distinguished. She had all the noble spirit of high birth in her character; all the dignity and softness of Elwyna; all the winning courtesies and tenderness which they possessed; with those added graces, which an age of more refinement gave.

During the last few days of my sojourn

at Gwayn, I had not gone beyond the village and the castle. Now, my fancy and my curiosity wandered to those peculiar spots, described as scenes so interesting and prominent in the legend.

From the Rev. Mr. Evans I had heard described the beautiful valley of Llangollen. I now proposed to ride thither along with him; for I was anxious to view the ruins of Castle Dinas Brân, and Valle Crucis; for my busy imagination peopled the former with those interesting beings long forgotten, and sleeping in the dust. I seemed already to have imbibed the romantic enthusiasm of the Welsh; and began to feel, that it is impossible long to dwell in mountainous countries, surrounded by those sublime and stupendous objects of creation, without a certain elevation of mind, that is untasted and unknown by the plodding lowlander.

A mile beyond Gwayn we reached the few scattered houses of the hamlet of Pennyclawd, and looked down thence

to the left on Haldon wood ; and soon emerged into the vale, full of beauty and grandeur. We passed over the noble aqueduct, Ponteyselfis. Nothing in nature could be more enchanting than the Arcadian scenery of Llangollen, which we approached through the centre of mountains, rising above her in picturesque and magnificent forms, with the lofty and conical summit of Dinas Brân, crowned with the ruined fragment of the castle, standing prominently alone in fallen grandeur above every other elevation.

Innumerable white cottages were seen peeping from amidst little tufted groves, on the wood-fringed borders of the rapid and sparkling Dee, which wanders through the enchanting valley like liquid crystal, fertilizing the rich plains, enlivened with innumerable sheep and cattle.

The village is seated in the pastoral valley. It is ancient, singular, and extremely picturesque ; possessing a rude irregularity, which is suited to the wild

scenery of which character it partakes. There is an imposing grandeur, yet smiling softness, so blended with every feature of this varied landscape, the eye cannot turn without novelty of objects, nor be satisfied which to admire as the most beautiful.

“Observe,” said Mr. Evans, (pointing it out) “yon elegant white villa, which stands in the vale, on a verdant lawn in the midst of rich plantations. It is the habitation of two ladies of high condition. They withdrew, at an early age, from the gay circles of fashionable life to this sequestered and romantic spot. They possess not merely the highest intellectual endowments, but all the wit, vivacity, and graceful ease of manners of the nation to which they belong. The interior of their villa is elegantly ornamented, and filled with a valuable and choice collection of books. Indeed, there is a sombre and quiet beauty in all that is within, which bespeaks the chaste and correct taste of its possessors.”

Mr. Evans proposed our spending the night at Llangollen, that in the morning we might explore the ruined abbey of Valle Crucis, and trace the mazy windings of the Dee.

The situation of the inn is peculiarly romantic. The windows opening upon the wild rocky banks of the river, which brawls in hoarse melody as it hurries over its stony bed; while houses are seen scattered on the green slopes, peeping through little tufted knolls encircled by those bare and rugged mountains which seemed to shut out this sequestered village from all the world.

Day-light gradually softened into the sombre shades of evening; and the whispering breeze played amongst the trees; which, with the low murmuring of the water blending with the wild notes of the Welsh harp*, gave a spirit of

* The harp is played throughout North Wales at every inn.

romance to the place, that made me almost fancy myself rather seated in the hall of Ossian, than in a scene of real life.

The worthy curate entertained me during the evening with many of the customs and superstitions of the country.

In the morning we rode to Valle Crucis, along the flowery and tufted banks of the river, which takes its course in a variety of beautiful and fanciful forms; sometimes broad and pellucid, then looses itself beneath the pensile branches of the trees, or hurrying in wild magnificence over the broken rocks forms itself into little natural cascades.

The abbey stands in solitary decay in this sequestered valley.

After gratifying myself with examining the ruin, I took leave of the lovely scenery of Llangollen, and returned with Mr. Evans to Gwayn, which place I proposed quitting immediately for those busy scenes of life, which afford little leisure or opportunity for rural contemplation.

* * * * *

The period for my departure was now fixed. To linger in this enchanting country any longer, and indulge myself from day to day, in the society of a woman, who, hourly gained on my admiration and esteem, was trifling away my peace of mind ; and unfitting me for the important duties of life which I had to fill in my particular avocation.

My short acquaintance with Miss Griffiths, scarcely admitted of a declaration of my attachment, more particularly from the delicate situation in which I was placed. She was a rich and beautiful young heiress, of high descent ; and though my own fortune was ample, my family respectable, but not noble, yet with Miss Griffiths's powerful attractions, I could scarcely hope to become a favoured suitor, where so many of rank and wealth would aspire to the honor of her hand. Yet there were moments when

I fancied that she viewed me with an eye of partial favour. There was a winning tenderness in her manner whenever she addressed me ; a soft expression in her eyes, as they timidly beamed upon me,—and though our conversation had only been on the most general topics, yet there was a flattering and marked attention paid to all my observations ; a persuasive tone in her voice, when she wished me to accede to her opinion, that could hardly be mistaken.

Whenever I spoke of leaving Gwayn, her bright countenance in a moment was shaded by sorrow ; the lustre of her eye was dimmed by a startling tear ; and her voice faltered when she attempted to speak.

“It is so delightful,” exclaimed Miss Griffiths, “and so rare to have found a person, who can enter, as you seem to do, into the charms of rural life ; who, with taste and judgment, can point out those enchanting scenes, which, from a child,

to the rescue of Maudlin Hughes, has made an impression, which no time, nor circumstance can efface; whilst Edelfrida Griffiths lives, she must always estimate so noble, so benevolent a character."

"But," she continued, hurrying from the subject, "you spoke, Sir, of soon leaving this country, and you have not yet seen half the beauties and curiosities by which we are surrounded."

"If our worthy curate," proceeded she, "will accompany us to-morrow, in a ride of a few miles hence, I will show you the wonders of Kynaston's Cave; and tell you the history of the wonderful man, called Sir Humphrey Kynaston, which almost outsteps credibility, so wild were his exploits. They are known, however, from authorities not to be doubted."

Had there been no other inducement than a few more hours of Miss Griffiths's society in this proposed excursion, I

should have prolonged my stay a few days longer.

My curiosity had been excited, previous to this conversation, to visit this singular cave, which had been described by Mr. Williams, who had all the traditions of the country by heart.

Mr. Evans was invited to meet me the following morning, to breakfast at the castle. Mrs. Powis, who was always there, when we were Miss Griffiths's guests, declined accompanying us; and before ten o'clock, we were on the road to Ness Cliff.

As we bent our course towards Oswestry, we left the magnificent mountain scenery behind; and advanced into the centre of pastoral lands, full of gentle undulations, richly skirted by luxuriant wood-lands. Indeed, the change of feature in the country, within the last five miles, was surprising: for every bold object gradually diminished, until entirely lost, being succeeded by tranquil vales, and soft rural scenery.

Passing through the pretty town of Oswestry, at the distance of seven miles from thence we reached a small village, scattered at the foot of a precipitous rock, composed of a species of red sandy stone; which extending into Cheshire, is partially covered from the summit with hanging woods.

This I found to be *Ness Cliff**; the famous spot within whose cold bosom dwelt the out-law, Sir Humphrey Kynaston.

The situation of Ness Cliff is extremely romantic; and commands from its most elevated point a vast extent of country, wildly diversified by the towering mountains of Montgomeryshire, whose spiral summits often veil themselves in the clouds.

Mounting a flight of steps from the garden of the small inn where we alighted, the path led forward by a gradual steep

* Ness Cliff is within ten miles of Shrewsbury.

ascent, through a sort of wilderness, composed of high trees, till we came to the mouth of this singular cave, which had been ingeniously hewn out of the solid rock. The impending cliff, in solitary magnificence, embracing its dark brow, partially shadowed with the o'er-hanging branches of trees, which, waving in the passing breeze, wildly mingled with the yellow gilly-flower, digitalis, and bramble, all springing in wanton exuberance from the rude bosom of the rocky bed.

We paused for a few minutes, to contemplate the savage loneliness of a spot, which seemed by nature designed for a banditti.

On reaching the part of the rock which was marked by no particular projection, but appeared to be one even mass of stone, the retreat of the robber was discerned by a high flight of stone steps, half broken and worn away, which led to a door, made of late years by the

solitary inhabitant ; for in former ages the entrance into the cave was through an aperture, sufficient only to admit Kynaston and his faithful horse. A hole, containing a pane of glass, answered the purpose of a window ; throwing sufficient light within to show the dreariness of this extraordinary human habitation.

We immediately gained admittance within. Here the appearance of romance was at an end. The old woman who showed the cave, by no means identified the haggard witch, weird sister, we looked for in a place so lonely and so wild.

The old woman was dressed in the plain homely garb of her country ; and spoke to us with the natural civility of a person, who expects to be rewarded for their trouble. She was, however, ready and apt in the history of Sir Humphrey Kynaston, which she had related, probably, a thousand times. She presented us with a small ballad, which is told with

pleasing simplicity and truth, by Mr. Dovaston, of Westfelton.*

I examined the cave with much interest and attention. It is of a circular form, from fifteen to twenty feet in dimensions. This rugged and unshapen mass of solid rock, most curiously so recedes within, as to form a cavity, sufficient to contain in the upper and lower compartment, the beds of the old woman and her son: originally the nightly shelter, and place of repose, for Kynaston and his horse. Here he lived, and here he expired, as the wall bears date, in the year 1564.

The present inhabitants of this savage dwelling have supplied themselves, not only with every necessary piece of furniture, but also with the means of sub-

* To his obliging communication I was afterwards indebted for the curious traditions which he has collected; and from whose authorities I have put together the tale related in the following pages. He is the author of several ingenious poems and Welsh ballads.

sistence. The young man, by occupation a cobbler, was seated in the midst of his tools and straps, busily at work; singing as he went on, for "want of thought."

The old woman had all her household utensils and crockery arranged on the rude stone shelves, which stood out in natural and grotesque projections from the wall. A large tabby cat is domesticated with them, and they appeared to be a most happy trio,—the old woman, her son, and the cat.

At the foot of the cave is spread a rude garden, consisting of vegetables and fruit.

"You could scarcely have credited," said Miss Griffiths, smiling at my surprise, "the possibility of so rude a spot being converted into the habitation of civilized people; living near a large town, and though remote from men, yet by no means so remote from the busy world, as the sequestered situation of the place bespeaks."

“ Does it not show,” she added, “ how much the happiness of mankind rest within themselves ? That it is not mere local situation that can procure contentment ; even the former barbarous inhabitant of this rude place was satisfied in making it his home. After the savage spoils of the day were ended, he could feel happy and domesticated with that faithful animal, which became his only companion and friend ; the partaker of his fare, and safely carrying him through every difficulty and danger, never betrayed his trust ; but lived and died his friend.

* * * * *

Little conversation passed during our ride home : I was not in spirits, and Miss Griffiths was unusually abstracted and silent.

I would fain have taken leave of her ; once more have expressed the sentiments of tenderness, which she had inspired ;

but she seemed averse from seeing me again; for when we separated at the end of the village, and she took the road which branched off to the castle, she kissed her hand as she rode hastily away, and in a faltering accent, exclaimed, as the colour mounted into her cheeks, "God bless you, Mr. Fortescue. When next you visit Wales, remember you have a friend at Gwayn castle, who would feel sorry to be forgotten."

I would have spoken, but she was fled. My eyes followed her till she was lost beneath the deep shade of the avenue of trees; and I should long have remained fixed to the spot, had not the worthy curate roused me from my reverie. "Miss Griffiths," he said, "deserves the esteem of all who have the pleasure of her acquaintance. He will be an enviable man who is blessed with her hand."

"You, Sir!" he continued, "if I guess right, seem to estimate, and to know her excellence."

“She is an angel!” I replied with vehemence. “Mr. Evans, I leave my heart in her deposite; and return home a desolate, and isolated being.”

We spoke no more till I reached the indoor. The good curate warmly shook me by the hand, and with a thousand cordial good wishes from him, we separated; for I found myself unequal to even his society and conversation, and wished to be alone.

My chatty worthy host and hostess were sorry to part with me; and each made several idle errands into the room, apparently on purpose to express their concern, and to invite me to their little inn again the ensuing summer.

There are few sensations more painful than departing from a place, where the hours had glided on, not merely with enjoyment, but had been productive of those social and endearing pleasures which sweeten every care in life.

I had come to Gwayn a lonely stranger;

but during my sojourn in the little village, I had proved the happy means of preserving the life of a useful, though humble, fellow-creature ; that very circumstance had opened a new source of interest and happiness to me. In Edelfrida Griffiths I found my existence so wrapt up, that though I scarcely dared hope ever to call her mine, I sensibly felt that life would prove valueless without her.

* * * * *

Once more set down in the great metropolis, and seated in my own solitary parlour ; one evening, soon after my return, meditating on my late eventful excursion into North Wales, I read over the little ballad presented to me by the old woman in the cave at Ness Cliff. It struck me, that if the extraordinary history of Sir Humphrey Kynaston was put together with some degree of method,

it would furnish an interesting and romantic tale.

A few years after my first visit into Wales, it so happened, that an authentic tradition was given me ; and I made it the amusement of my leisure hours to arrange the following story.

KYNASTON'S CAVE.

ON one of those resplendent mornings in the month of May, when all nature diffuses gladness around, the inhabitants of a small inn in Shropshire, were roused from sleep at an earlier hour than usual, to usher in with mirth and festivity the marriage of the young Isabel, of Oswestry, with Sir Humphrey Kynaston. She was the daughter of William Griffith, called *Côch*, (or red,) a man of low degree.* But Isabel was lovely as the blooming rose. There was a simple grace in her

* His second wife was Isabel, daughter of William Griffith, called William *Côch*, (the red,) of Oswestry. — *Doveston's Sketch on the Beauties of England and Wales.*

deportment, which characterised her pure and virtuous mind. It was not decorated with fine accomplishments, but had that within "which passeth shew;" glowing with all those genuine feelings of benignity and goodness, which had won the affection and respect of the simple kind-hearted people amongst whom she lived. All of them were now eager to testify their regard on this joyous occasion; and in multitudes crowded round her father's cottage, to follow her with their good wishes, and to see her depart.

A number of horsemen, gaily attired in wedding-suits, waited to conduct the bride and bridegroom to Middle-castle,*

* Middle-castle was built square, within a square moat, and had a square court. There was a piece of ground, near half an acre, on the east side of the castle, which piece was moated round. The entrance to this piece was through a gate-house, which stood near the east corner of the castle moat. In the gate-house were four chambers. The passage from the end of the bridge went into the middle castle-court, on the east side of which was

Sir Humphrey Kynaston's noble domain. The cavalcade extended from one end of Oswestry to the other, consisting of men, women, and children, all decked out with ribbons; and the young girls strewing baskets of flowers before the happy pair, for miles on the way. When Isabel reached this princely residence, she was struck with surprise and awe, at the solemn and gloomy aspect of the castle. She had never strayed far beyond her native town, and her young imagin-

a large room, supposed to have been a kitchen; on the same side was the parlour, and opposite to the passage a large hall. The castle was only two stories high, with a flat roof. — *Ancient History of Shropshire.*

On leaving Ellesmere, the road lies in a southerly direction, and at the distance of four miles and a half passes through the village of Cockshut; four miles beyond which is Middle, where formerly was an ancient castle, which was demolished by an earthquake in the year 1688. As to the present state of Middle, it is merely a straggling hamlet of very little thoroughfare, with a few ruins, and one prominent trace of the castle. — *Devastation's Sketch on the Beauties of England and Wales.*

ation had not formed the least idea of the grandeur that awaited her.

The busy gossips of the neighbourhood had rather bewildered than delighted her, by recounting Sir Humphrey's unbounded wealth, and the grandeur of his retinue; nor could she at all imagine how such useless appendages could, in any degree, constitute the happiness of life with the man she loved. To her Sir Humphrey had made no vain presumptuous boast of the magnificence of his castle, nor the vastness of his riches: it was a theme on which he had never spoken. Isabel, therefore, hoped that report exaggerated these things; for, if true, she feared that tender confidence, that free communication of kindred minds, could no longer exist, if her husband must be by her regarded with that distance and respect which the great superiority of his condition must naturally inspire, and he of course would expect.

There was an easy freedom in the

manners of Sir Humphrey Kynaston, that had a magic charm on all who knew him, and insensibly won their esteem. Though most courteous, he was extremely affable, cheerful, and good-humoured; he was conversant and entertaining, lavish in the pleasures of the table, holding in the utmost contempt those trammels of the world, the frequent accompaniment of pride and wealth. Generous, noble, and sincere, he rose superior to the high-boasting of little minds: he boasted not. To the timid maiden, whose heart he had obtained, he rather sought to conceal his high degree than to proclaim it.

When the proud and frowning castle first broke upon Isabel's view, Sir Humphrey remarking her astonishment, as he gaily rode beside her, exclaimed, with a smile, "That gloomy old building, my sweet Isabel, heavily as it seems to lour upon us, is not, I assure you, a state-prison, but the ancient residence of my

father ; and, as such, your future home.

We will make its old walls echo with cheerful songs, with harps and minstrelsy ; and feasting, likewise, old Côch," added Sir Humphrey, turning to Isabel's father with a familiar and significant nod.

" Aye, that we will, Sir Humphrey," he replied : " you are a right hearty gentleman, God bless your honor, and send you health and prosperity with my daughter. No man knows better in all the county of Shropshire how to push about the goblet, and to make his friends welcome."

" I'll warrant," continued Sir Humphrey, " we will make merry in the old hall ; and for my sweet and gentle Isabel, she shall have a train of pretty damsels to wait upon and amuse her."

Isabel's eyes were dimmed with tears ; she blushed, and trembled ; for she was struck with awe as she surveyed the moat, the heavy draw-bridge, the small grated dismal windows, and that air of

melancholy state Middle-castle so eminently possessed.

She, however, tried to smile away her tears. In a soft voice, and engaging simplicity, she said, "With the husband that I love, a palace or a cot is to me the same. When you married the humble Isabel, your affection, I perceive, meant to exalt her to a lot above herself. May I, dear Sir Humphrey, so act as not to disgrace the choice which you have made!"

When the gates of Middle-castle were thrown open to admit the noble bride and bridegroom, then was Sir Humphrey's regal splendour, and his munificent spirit, amply displayed. All that taste and fancy could devise were produced, to welcome and amuse his beauteous lady.

The extraordinary grandeur of the entertainment dazzled and surprised the simple Isabel. The knights and esquires, cloathed in vests and mantles richly trimmed with gold, with graceful plumes of feathers waving in their hats, seemed

to her one moving picture of romance ; and, quite abashed, she scarce knew how enough to thank them for their gracious courtesy.

The tiara of diamonds which she wore, outshone not the brightness of those radiant eyes so dark and beautiful, that beamed with modest tenderness upon her noble husband ; while, with smiles of fond encouragement, he made her take her seat of state at the upper table of the banquet.

Feasting, revelry, and song, for succeeding days prevailed at Middle-castle ; until the senses of the meek and simple Isabel seemed almost giddy with the boisterous mirth of the entertainment.

Her father was one of the most noisy in the company. His delight exceeded all bounds. His senses were overpowered, nearly to delirium, with the elevation of his daughter's lot ; and while he feasted to excess on the choice dainties which were set before him, his head was intoxi-

cated with the variety of liquors, of which he drank too freely.

He was a man of violent passions. Like most persons of weak intellect, he was obstinate, headstrong, and irascible. He could not endure contradiction, and entirely ruled his wife, the meekest and most submissive of women.

From the period that Sir Humphrey Kynaston had distinguished his daughter, William Griffith had neglected his daily labour, (he was by occupation a plodding farmer) and attended Sir Humphrey in the sports of the chace, and other rural pastimes; making himself not only useful, but latterly important to him. Old *Cóch*, as he was usually designated, from that time became an altered man. His excellent unassuming wife saw, with the most painful anxiety and apprehension, the influence Sir Humphrey had gained over her weak husband. But what grieved her still more, was his having gained their child's affections; for she augured no

good to Isabel, from a marriage so far above the station in which she was born and lived. Bred in the simplest scenes of rural life, and frugally existing by those rural occupations which the pastoral landscapes of Shropshire afford, her worthy and guileless mother was lost in wonder, and overwhelmed with distress, when her husband informed her that Sir Humphrey Kynaston proposed to marry their daughter.

“It cannot surely be, Master Griffith,” she said, raising her eyes and hands with astonishment, “that so great and powerful a gentleman can desire to marry our humble simple child!—I shall never give my consent,” she added. “A poor sort of a figure our Isabel will make, without the education and behaviour of those great dames, it would be more fitting for Sir Humphrey to choose.—Beside, Master Griffith,” she proceeded, with a look of seriousness, “I have heard such a number of extraordinary stories of his

odd flights and mischievous doings, I should be quite down-hearted to see our Isabel the wife of such a man. Therefore I tell you, Master Griffith, I shall never freely give my consent to any such match."

"But I shall give mine," cried her husband, elevating his voice to a tone of authority, "and that is enough. Do you think, woman, I am an idiot, to refuse so great an offer for our daughter*? Sir Humphrey has a power of money; and is, though it must be owned somewhat wild†, a right hearty noble-spirited man; and I am sure, that pretty face of our Isabel's ought to make her fortune."

"That pretty face, Master Griffith, will be her greatest misfortune, if it is to be bought, forsooth, by that *wild* Sir

* But William Cõch, her father fond,
Sought a match for his daughter high;
And it pleased him well when young Humphrey fell
In love with her coal-black eye. — *Dovaston*.

† From his dissolute life, he was called "Humphrey the Wild." — *Dovaston*.

Humphrey, as all the country call him. I had rather, at once, follow her to her grave ; for nothing but sorrow will overtake her. When it is too late, remember I forewarned you."

"I do not force our Isabel to marry Sir Humphrey," replied Master Griffith, somewhat perplexed. "Our daughter, as you know, wife, has taken a fancy herself to Sir Humphrey ; and it would go hard with her, poor young thing, to cross her in her love."

"Then you know she loves him," replied his wife. "More's the pity, Master Griffith. But Isabel is a dutiful child ; and, with a little persuasion and argument, I could convince her it is not for her happiness this match. — But," she proceeded, "you have always encouraged her in it, and thrown her in Sir Humphrey's way, when he came here on some idle pretext or another."

"It is no use your argufying, woman," said he, losing all temper and patience ;

“I tell you, once for all, that I have given my consent, and shall not go from my word.”

He abruptly left his wife, and sent Isabel on some trifling errand to a distance, that she might be out of her way.

Dame Griffith was very unhappy respecting this intended alliance; but when she found, that to set it aside was impossible, she remained neuter. She contemplated the change in her condition with the most tearful apprehension. The extraordinary alteration it would make in her darling child, elevated to splendour and wealth, from comparative poverty, was a trial to a youthful mind that threatened to overthrow that simplicity, that purity of thought, which were the most engaging features in Isabel's character. Perhaps she would become proud, unkind, heartless, when under the influence of a husband, whose habits of life were ferocious; and who, according to report, not only indulged in the pleasures

of the table, but in the most extravagant carousals. She was afraid the delicacy of Isabel's mind would be shocked, when such scenes were first unfolded; and though time might somewhat reconcile her to her husband's modes of life, yet, formed with so much native tenderness of character, she ultimately would sink into depression of spirits with a being so ungenial. Dame Griffith, however, kept all these sentiments to herself; she dared not give them utterance; and she often withdrew to conceal her falling tears, when she beheld Isabel, previous to her marriage, the happiest of the happy.

Sir Humphrey Kynaston had first seen the young Isabel in her father's orchard, where she was standing to catch the golden fruit, as it was shaken from the loaded boughs. For some time he remained fixed to the spot, anxiously watching her from an adjoining field. He listened to the engaging sound of her mirthful voice, now speaking with

playful vivacity, then warbling a few verses of a pastoral ballad. Her hat had fallen off, and a profusion of dark glossy ringlets half-shaded her glowing cheek, rosy with health and beauty. Her black refulgent eyes sparkled with all that animated liveliness which bespeaks a heart at ease. Her mouth was dimpled with smiles, as she now and then spoke in sportive strain to the young man who had climbed the tree, and was throwing the apples into her lap at a distance from her. Such was the scene; such the person that first had captivated the heart of the dissolute and handsome Sir Humphrey Kynaston. It had proved a subject of astonishment to all the neighbourhood, that a man so full of youthful pranks, and extravagant follies, should be induced to marry; but more particularly, so lowly and simple a maiden as Isabel Griffith.

This gay, this imposing stranger, soon won her youthful heart. His open ingenuous countenance, the sparkling intel-

ligence of his fine eyes, the animating gracefulness of his address, so free, easy, yet respectful; with his noble air, captivated the heart and senses of the young Isabel. It was not views of ambition that fired her youthful fancy. No, it was genuine affection; and, with Sir Humphrey Kynaston for her husband, she more gladly would have shared with him a lowly dwelling than all those dazzling honors which the splendour of his fortune promised.

* * * * *

Isabel's present mode of life proved a strange contrast to her former rural and simple habits. Its novelty rather bewildered than charmed her. The ceremonious state which her rank imposed, was a fetter so irksome, she felt like a poor imprisoned bird in a golden cage, which, in vain, panted for freedom. She was not suffered to walk abroad unattended; to

climb, as formerly, the healthful pleasant hills, nor pursue those pastoral occupations in which she had always delighted.

The splendour of her garments were a heavy encumbrance. She never had worn an ornament beyond a blooming flower in her bosom; and the heavy jewels that decked her person, gave her an air of grandeur to which she was, at all times, reconciled; because Sir Humphrey admired her.

He was all tenderness and indulgence; when they were together, he spoke continually of his happiness; but she wanted that which she possessed but sparingly, his society. Each succeeding day Sir Humphrey was less and less at home. When he left the castle, he spoke not of his return; it might be quickly, or it might be long; she dared not ask. She loved, but yet she feared her husband. She spent the tedious hours in weariness, in wakeful watchings: and though the gentle Maude, with anxious looks of

sympathy regarded her, she was too wise, discreet, to tell her misery to those around her, and tried to smile and hide her tears; but her faded cheek, and wasting form, spoke her inward pining.

No mother's fostering bosom now she had to hush her cares — to speak to her in terms of peace and comfort. In vain she looked around this vast and dreary castle, heavy in grandeur, but uncheered by sunshine; unlike the little humble cot overspread with budding roses, where happily she dwelt and caroled with the birds, whose lively songs ushered in the morning.

From her father she derived no consolation. Intoxicated with his altered life since he had become Sir Humphrey's guest, his wife, his home, he had quite abandoned.

Whither they went, or with whom associated, she did not know, nor could she guess; each week, and each succeeding month, their absence became more

long and frequent ; till the wretched Isabel, unable to conceal the anguish of her heart, when Sir Humphrey enquired what splendid gift he should bring her on his return, with a heavy sigh and tearful eye, she fondly replied, " I ask no other gift save your society."

" When, dear Sir Humphrey," adding with timidity, " will these gay carousals end ? When will my father return to Oswestry ? It is not kind so long to leave my mother ; and in sooth, dearest, I am fain to chide you. We poor women cannot join your sports ; and I shall joy to see the day, when I may hope to have my husband's company."

Sir Humphrey's brow was clouded, and he looked displeased.

She took his hand. " Forgive your simple Isabel, I pray, if she has offended. But if you knew how sad, how solitary, all here appears, my life, my joy, when you are absent, sure you would not chide for my so saying."

“ ’Tis these partial absences, dearest Isabel, that give new rapture to each meeting. By nature we were formed to taste those ruder sports, at which female delicacy revolts. Your women will amuse you. They will instruct you to embroider, to play upon the harp, the lute, and those occupations that best become a woman. To pass my hours for ever here in idle dalliance, sweetest, would be most unseemly.” He caressed her fondly, and, apparently averse from more questioning, rose to quit the apartment.

Before Sir Humphrey went, his lady requested that she might see her father. “ He avoids,” she said, “ my company, as if he were afraid to meet me ; I pray you, dear Sir Humphrey, tell him, that I fain would speak with him.”

Soon after, her father entered with a sullen angry brow ; his face was flushed and bloated with the excesses of the table, and when Isabel beheld him, and was

flying into his embrace, she hastily retreated, and burst into tears.

“What would you, daughter,” he exclaimed with a conscious look of shame. “Be quick in saying, for I am in haste; Sir Humphrey waits my attendance; we have far to go, and the day is much advanced.”

“Far to go!” interrupted the Lady Kynaston, “ah! ’tis as I feared; your home, and my poor mother, are both deserted; and she and your unfortunate daughter are both alike unhappy.”

“What, Isabel,” enquired her father hastily, “should make you unhappy? — are you not married to a noble gentleman? — have you not this grand place to live in, and handmaids to attend upon you? — you are, in good sooth, much to be pitied,” he added, with a contemptuous laugh.

Her father’s sharp rebuke Isabel felt so unkind, she was unable to reply. He proceeded: “With me and my concerns,

I desire that you interfere not. You had best leave off that silly whining, and dry up those useless tears, if you would please your husband. But it seems a woman's privilege to weep at will; and, therefore, men hold in contempt such weakness — attempt not, child, to pry into our affairs, in future; or you may meet with trials harder than the present to complain of."

He quitted her abruptly, leaving the untutored Isabel in a flood of tears, which she could not suppress, and she retired in agony to her chamber.

Sir Humphrey and her father, in the meantime, set out on their wild exploits to join their gay associates, where at a hunting seat Sir Humphrey held his daily revels. There, by appointment, he always found his dissolute companions, who gladly made the generous unsuspecting Kynaston, the tool of their extravagances; for his purse and heart were always open, and with convivial freedom, he largely gave to all, unheeding that a

time might come, when his own necessities would require the smallest part of what he now so idly lavished.

There is even in the most depraved mind, a reverence paid to virtue; a tribute of respect that gives a check to those unbridled vices, when the pure in heart, the chaste in conduct, are present. Such were Sir Humphrey's feelings. Middle castle, once the scene of all his happiness, and those refined enjoyments which the abandoned cannot taste, now found it a place of sad restraint, for he was awed even by the simple Isabel; so beautiful is virtue, he could not, dared not, introduce to her those dissolute associates, whose carousing would shock her delicacy, offend her chastity, and humiliate himself in her esteem. Middle-castle was now no residence for him. Her father too, though poor, he had found happy and industrious — and him he had corrupted — drawn from his life of peace, of innocence, and simplicity. The retrospect was terrible.

He dared not now look back, nor now reclaim his conduct ; for he had too deeply plunged into every vice and folly ; and his character for extravagance, was so established throughout the county, his own relations had abandoned him, and refused to countenance even the meek and guileless Isabel : his fortune now was desperate, and desperate proved his conduct.

* * * * *

Days and weeks rolled on, but yet Sir Humphrey came not. The poor neglected Isabel, who had fondly built her future joy in the promised child she hoped to rear, was doomed to disappointment, for before she looked for time, she brought forth a dead son ; thus was in a moment crushed the only cherished expectation, that this precious tie now dissolved for ever, might have restored her wandering husband to her arms.

Reports the most frightful and alarming reached her ears ; and though she hoped that these reports might be exaggerated ; yet, she had too much cause to dread the fatal truth, that Sir Humphrey was at the head of the most abandoned set of men, who lived by bold and unlicensed depredations.

Their late magnificent establishment within the last few months was given up. Two or three domestics alone remained of all the numerous retinue, who in pompous state had waited upon Sir Humphrey and his lady. But the gentle Isabel commanded, by her meekness and resignation, the respect and love of the few that still were with her, and somewhat cheered her mournful solitude.

From Sir Rowland Corbet, and the good-natured Maude, she received those soothing kind attentions for which she felt most grateful, and though they could not dissipate her sorrow, they afforded her partial comfort.

This courteous knight once had been Sir Humphrey Kynaston's intimate associate ; but the mildness of his temper, and the simple habits of his life, soon dissolved a friendship, which could not prove congenial, when Sir Humphrey's scenes of riot and excesses became known.

The lovely young woman, whom he so cruelly had deserted, Sir Rowland Corbet now sometimes visited ; but it was an indulgence so dangerous to his peace, that it was but seldom he went to Middle-castle ; which was not far distant from his own domain. The tender sadness of the Lady Kynaston's beautiful countenance ; her wasted form, the silence of her grief ; yet the eager look of anxious enquiry which her radiant eyes expressed, though often dimmed with tears, engaged his pity, while it won his love. To her, he brought no cruel tale ; many as were spread, to disturb her peace, Not so, however, one of Sir Humphrey's

wicked emissaries, who, while with fawning flattery he tried to comfort her, at the same moment stabbed her to the heart. The vile Sir Adam Lewis was the friend employed by her absent husband, to bear despatches to his poor forsaken wife ; and with vague expressions of affection, flatter her with the expectation of a return he never purposed.

“ Lady,” said this man of honey tongue, taking her hand, “ weep not so bitterly ; those tears spoil that lovely face, and dim those starry eyes. They are vainly shed, for Sir Humphrey deserves them not ; nor waste that graceful form in unavailing sorrow.”

“ True,” added this treacherous friend, “ I bear you these despatches from your husband ; but what of that, he thinks not of you, cares not for you. His days are spent in exploits the most daring ; and his fortunes are so desperate, that you of all women, Lady Kynaston, are the most to be pitied : for you

are a treasure thrown away, on one who does not know your value."

"Sir Knight," interrupted Isabella, with proud dignity, "you do forget your embassy, thus to speak of my husband, thus to take advantage of his absence to insult me. If it be Sir Humphrey's pleasure to absent himself, it is my duty to submit. He has exalted me from low degree, to bear his noble name; know, therefore, most uncourteous Knight, that when you would betray your trust, it is not to Lady Kynaston that your proffered pity, or gross flattery, will prove acceptable."

"Maude," she added, taking the young damsel's arm, "we will retire, and leave this stranger knight to recollect himself."

"Your pardon, lady," Sir Adam said, with fawning courtesy, as his small grey eyes scarce were seen beneath his downcast look. "I only meant to prepare you for those reports which daily fly abroad,

and through some other channel might reach your ear, and like an electric shock surprise you."

"It is not for a wife," replied Isabel, with stern forbearance, "who loves her husband, to listen to the busy tongue of idle rumour. If afflictions come," she added, trying to suppress the starting tear, "when the hour of trial does arrive, and not till then, the mind must fortify itself for the severe endurance."

"Perhaps too," Sir Adam exclaimed, with a malicious smile and taunt, "it is also false, that even the beauteous Lady Kynaston is now deserted by her husband for a lady not half so beautiful, Elizabeth Meredith, daughter of the rich and powerful Meredith ap Howel ap Morice, even of Oswestry.*"

"Monster!" cried Isabel, with a

* By the advice of Sir Humphrey's friends, he paid his addresses to a young lady in the neighbourhood, and finally succeeded in his proposals

piercing shriek, "would you destroy me quite? Is it for that purpose you were sent hither? — to see me die before ye!"

"Barbarous man!" she continued, tears streaming down her pale cheeks — "thus to triumph in the anguish of a fond and faithful wife. But it is not from you that I will credit this vague, this vile report."

"Therefore, Sir Knight," she added with dignity and more self-command,

for her hand, together with a handsome fortune.—

Adventures of Sir H. Kynaston.

Sir Humphrey Kynaston had two wives; his first was Elizabeth, daughter of Meredith ap Howel ap Morice, of Oswestry. His second wife was Isabel, daughter of William Griffith, called William Côch, (the red) of Oswestry, a person of low degree.—
Dovaston.

The author has taken the liberty of making some alterations in the original tradition, to promote the succeeding interest of the story. It appears from the authorities quoted, that Elizabeth Meredith ap Howel ap Morice was his first wife; Isabel Griffith his second.

“when my husband in future sends despatches, say from me, I pray that the one who bears them, may prove more faithful to his trust.”

“Herioc woman!” exclaimed the impassioned knight, falling on his knees before her, “though you are deceived, deserted, I must admire your constancy and virtue.”

“Then,” cried she with firmness, “insult me not — I forgive this trial of my faith; for to suspect Sir Humphrey of the guilt you have just depicted, is quite impossible, without his brain be touched with madness.”

Longer Sir Adam Lewis would have detained her, longer have spoken; but the Lady Kynaston retired, more dead than alive, supporting her trembling frame by holding the arm of Maude.

The weight of sorrow that now oppressed the deserted Isabel, seemed almost too weighty to be borne; neglected,

insulted, supplanted in her husband's affections, by one more rich and noble, was of all her trials the sorest to endure. Yet such was her confidence in the fidelity of her husband, that even now she was incredulous to a report so vile. Sir Humphrey's desperate fortune, and his desperate actions, she was compelled to believe in part; for long she had seen, in silent grief, his boundless profusion and expence. The careless ease, and the imprudence with which, as governor of Middle-castle*, he had filled that important office; and heard his conduct arraigned. His stay was always brief, his visits transient. His unhappy lady long foresaw that his enemies would soon displace him. The deputy which he had appointed, waited with an anxious prying eye to supersede him. Murmurs

* His imprudent conduct, and the large debts he contracted, obliged him to fly Middle-castle, of which he was governor.—*Dorseton*.

and dissatisfaction of late, perpetually had sounded in the ears; and first awakened the suspicion, that report was just in the dissolute life he led. But that his vices extended to an action so unprincipled as to ally himself to another whilst she existed, she thought not merely impossible, but a degree of cruelty to an unoffending wife, Sir Humphrey could not practice. His heart was not naturally depraved nor vicious. It was kind and generous; but evil indulgences and evil habits had corrupted every noble and virtuous feeling, and it appeared that he had abandoned himself to those propensities that disgraced and ruined him.

Irresolute how to act, Isabel was lost in mournful contemplation of the future, when her almost stupified faculties were roused by a request from a person at the outer gate, begging instant admittance to her presence on an affair of moment.

Trembling and alarmed, Isabel desired

first to know whence they came, and the import of their business.

Maude informed her lady it was a travelling monk, who sought admittance, but on no needy errand, nor would he depart without speaking to the Lady Kynaston.

A painful apprehension seized her, that it was Sir Adam Lewis, who, thus disguised, came again to terrify and insult her.

The trembling Isabel would fain not have seen the monk, but Maude prevailed upon her to admit the holy man.

His face, his person, when he threw back his cowl, were alike unknown to Isabel. In a faltering voice she enquired, what pious errand had brought him to Middle-castle.

“Lady,” he replied, “it is an errand for your ear alone; dismiss the maiden and I will speak it.”

She desired Maude to leave the room, waiting with dread and wonder to hear his errand.

“It is a mournful embassy, lady,” he said, with solemn preparation, “on which I come. To you, it is most sorrowful, but a cause of joy to those who sent me hither.”

“If,” he added, “you would see once more that tender mother alive who gave you birth, on this instant you must hie with me to Oswestry. She bade me seek you here—and here I find ye, in all this proud state of vanity. I have promised to give you safe conduct to that pious dying woman. But, daughter, I cannot tarry, you must be quick, if you would see her; the departing soul, winging its way to eternity, waits not for worldly things.”

This new and deep affliction fell like a thunder-bolt upon Isabel. She gazed in vacant surprise upon the friar, for she could neither speak, nor weep.

“Haste ye, daughter,” he said, with composure, “and prepare to go with me to Oswestry, if you would see your mother before she goes hence.”

“Holy father,” exclaimed Isabel, at length bursting into tears, “her heart is broken; that is the malady which has destroyed her. Wretched woman! and far more wretched Isabel, to cause the death of such a mother!”

“Wait ye at the outer gate,” she added, “and I will quickly follow.”

The Lady Kynaston wrapt a cloak and hood about her person, and having told Maude that she was going on a charitable visit with the good friar, she left the castle.

She cast a wistful look on the dreary pile of building, which, on first entering, she had then surveyed with a sensation of awe and depression, that seemed to forebode her future wretchedness, as mistress of that stately residence.

“Daughter,” said the benevolent friar, perceiving the Lady Kynaston’s pale countenance and trembling frame, “your feeble steps will never bear you homeward. At Ellesmere, we must find some

means of conveyance, less wearisome than your poor tottering limbs."

"Ah, good father," she replied, mournfully, "the strength of youth seems indeed fled ere its full vigour is arrived; so much does grief decay the poor frame. Those were joyous days, when, in the little humble cot to which we are slowly hastening, I pursued those simple rural occupations consistent with my humble birth, and the sweet benignant smile of my precious mother rewarded the cheerful labours of the day."

"That smile will yet reward and bless you, and her last sigh be heaved upon your gentle bosom, if we tarry not too long by the way."

"Soon will that smile be set in death!" exclaimed Isabel, weeping bitterly. "Soon those eyes, which shone with gladness on me, be closed for ever!"

"You part, my daughter, but to meet again. You sorrow only for a while;

and this brief life is given us but as a passage to eternal bliss."

At Ellesmere, Isabel was furnished with a horse, which conveyed her to Oswestry beneath the shade of evening.

A glimmering lamp shone in the silent chamber of her dying mother, which the Lady Kynaston entered, followed by the friar.

"Daughter, support yourself," he said, in a soothing accent, "else your agitated look and manner will disturb the dying."

"Raise your eyes;" he continued, approaching the bed; "look on your child once more, she comes to seek your blessing."

Isabel threw herself on her knees, and pressed her lips on the cold cheek of her mother.

She turned her dying eyes with fondness on her daughter; and, in an anxious feeble voice, said, "Isabel, you are not happy."

“O, most blest,” she evasively replied, “that again I see my mother.”

“Poor child! you come to close those eyes that love to look upon you, though now becoming dim with the spreading shades of death. Sorrow not for me,” she added, “when I am gone; but consider my removal a blest release from suffering. — Ever good, ever dutiful, has been your conduct,” she proceeded, after a long pause from exhaustion; “therefore, I feel assured, that in the heavy hour of those sad trials which await you, you will have support, nor sink beneath them. To this holy man I consign you. He will guard, watch over you; for the evil day is fast approaching, from which not even a tender mother’s shelter could preserve you.”

“The proud Elizabeth Meredith ap Howel,” she continued, with a heavy sigh, “soon will bear a higher name, but not a happier one. Do not contend it with her, for you are humbled and disgraced by one so ignoble.”

Her daughter sobbed aloud; but listened, with deep attention, to her dying parent.

“Retire you then, my poor Isabel,” she said, “to where the good father may seem fit to place you. Exalted far above your low degree, you have only lived in the proud chambers of the great to be scorned, despised, neglected. Be no more debased; but go where unknown, unheard of, you may shun a husband who is become a *robber*, broken every bond divine and honest; and, it is reported, if he thus goes on, he will finally be outlawed.”

“Alas! then,” exclaimed the sinking Isabel, “it is too true all that I have heard; and the cruel Kynaston only lured me from my late humble, happy home, with his false vows of love and constancy, and his golden hours of promised happiness. From blithe content, placed me in his stately castle; where, uncheered by friend or kindred,

he left me in splendid misery to all the bitterness of woe, and weary watching."

"Long," interrupted her dying mother, "has Sir Humphrey Kynaston been unworthy, my Isabel, of a wife so pure in mind, so gentle, and so virtuous. Though it is my sad duty to unfold his vices to you, yet, before the hand of death closes all human objects from my view, and thus to wring your heart with agony, I feel I could not die in peace, did I not perform that duty."

Holy father," she went on, taking the hand of Isabel with mournful tenderness, "look to my poor child's immortal soul, when I am numbered with the dead. Guard her from the evil of that wicked man, who I no more can call her husband. Find some home, however humble, to shelter this poor forsaken one from the coming tempest."

"Daughter," exclaimed the friar, in a soothing accent, at the same time elevating his hands in the action of benediction

over her head, "you shall be protected from all harm."

"Little," added her mother, "will suffice for her support; but the little which I have to bestow will preserve the tender thread of life, if her poor heart breaks not."

"Dearest Isabel," with faltering accents she said, pausing at intervals, as life fast was fleeing from her, "in your infant days I hushed you smiling to my breast; now, on your gentle bosom, I would sink in peace to sleep; and, with the latest breath of my departing moments, call blessings on thee, my loved child."

She died — enfolded in the embraces of the wretched Isabel — her marble cheek rested on her bosom; her lifeless hand was clasped around her neck, and her poor daughter was by the holy friar carried senseless to another chamber.

An awful stillness reigned — for all was hushed in death, and the scene of mortal life *was closed for ever!*



Sir Humphrey Kynaston, rendered wretched by the rapid decrease of that fortune which he had so profusely squandered and lavished on his wild associates, felt now ashamed to return to the deeply injured Isabel, and spent much of his time in idle dalliance with Elizabeth Meredith ap Howel, daughter of a wealthy man at Oswestry. Her father, like Sir Humphrey, loved convivialty. He gave freely in to the pleasures of the table, enjoyed the sports of the chase; and, though he neither knew nor joined in Sir Humphrey's wild exploits, he was fond of his company, and pleased with the admiration and flattery which he bestowed upon his daughter.

Report was falsified, in proclaiming an intended alliance with the fair and handsome Elizabeth, for her father knew that Sir Humphrey was already married. It was a malicious suggestion of the moment

of Sir Adam Lewis's, arising from his mortified pride, when he beheld the stern dignity of the Lady Kynaston, and the firm confidence which she displayed in her husband's fidelity, when, with demoniac wickedness, he sought to shake her faith, and undermine her happiness.

But it was not here he stopped. With the spirit of a fiend, he broke into the lowly dwelling of her afflicted mother; alike deserted by her misguided husband. He unfolded all Sir Humphrey's vices, the desertion of his lady, and his purposed union with Elizabeth Meredith ap Howel.

The blow he aimed was struck — it pierced her heart, and proved fatal.

A rumour reached Sir Humphrey's ears, in the midst of one of his gay carousals, that the Lady Kynaston was fled from Middle-castle, whither no one knew, nor had there been any attempt made to trace her; having been conjectured she had departed thence to join her husband.

Deep remorse and sorrow seized Sir Humphrey on this intelligence; but though at the moment it proved sincere, yet it was transient. The simple grace, the timid gentleness of Isabel, had captivated his heart, and he married her. But when the magic of her charms were no longer new, he wearied for those sports, and those associates, to which he had been always habituated. Nor were the gay companions of Sir Humphrey's table willing to relinquish that profusion which he so heedlessly lavished on them.

A chase, in the vicinity of Oswestry, brought him to the mansion of Meredith ap Howel ap Morice. His daughter was a perfect contrast to the tender black-eyed Isabel. Fair, buxom, lively, and bold, she diverted him with her quaint and cheerful sallies—so different from the pensive softness of Isabel, who, of late, had never met her husband without tears, timidity, and reserve.

Sir Adam Lewis had, on his return

from Middle-castle, described the Lady Kynaston as cold, indifferent; and she wrote not by him, which much offended Sir Humphrey. She could not write. Shocked, insulted, broken-hearted, she was disabled from further exertion; and the feeble effort which she had made to repel the insult offered her by Sir Adam, was more than her weak spirits could sustain.

Sir Humphrey speeded off to Middle-castle, on the report of Isabel's departure.

Maude, with tears and loud lament, on the instant of his arrival rushed into his presence, to enquire after her beloved lady. No letter, no message, gave the least intimation of whither she was gone; neither had she been missed from the castle until far on her way to Oswestry, having signified to Maude that she was going with the friar on a charitable visit.

Sir Humphrey, finding that his lady was really gone, again, during a short

period, resumed the government of Middle-castle.

All search, all enquiry, proved fruitless after Isabel. The lowly dwelling of her parents was uninhabited and shut up, and he learnt that the Lady Kynaston's mother was no more. Her father some time had fled the country, and the poor friar, who shrived her mother, was supposed to have returned to some needy convent to which he belonged.

Now did Sir Humphrey turn his thoughts and views towards the fair Elizabeth Meredith ap Howel. Her father was a rich and powerful man — Isabel must certainly be dead; and his present condition being desperate, an alliance with Elizabeth would repair his broken fortunes. The report of Isabel's flight and death was accordingly widely circulated, and believed throughout the neighbourhood; and Sir Humphrey, once more, set out to make his fortune.

His proposals to the fair Elizabeth

were gladly accepted, and she became the wife of Sir Humphrey Kynaston, with the full consent of her father.

* * * * *

The happiness and prosperity of the present Lady Kynaston proved even more short-lived than that which the deserted Isabel had tasted.

On Elizabeth's marriage, Middle-castle again became the scene of sumptuous entertainment and boisterous mirth. Sir Humphrey drew his gay associates around him, and Elizabeth's pride was flattered by the adulation which was paid her. Unlike the timid Isabel, she freely partook of the amusements which prevailed at Middle-castle. She joined the chase, witnessed the various games which went on, danced and sung; and, with little female delicacy, never retired until she was commanded by her husband. She felt the proud consciousness that she was

the lady of the castle, and presumed upon that title with a bold superiority; which, after a short time, greatly disgusted Sir Humphrey. Sway was her passion, and with little gentleness she reprimanded him whenever he displeased her. These were matrimonial shackles, that sat most uneasily upon him. If the tender softness of Isabel had proved insipid, the bold authority which the present Lady Kynaston assumed, was what he would not brook.

It was after a sharp contest, in which she fiercely reproached Sir Humphrey with having squandered in useless profusion the fortune she had so opportunely brought him, he passionately exclaimed, "I shall leave, insolent and proud dame, the remainder of that fortune of which you so meanly boast, for the future time in your own keeping. Keep it, spend it, do with it what you may, I renounce it and you for ever. Thus to be fettered, insulted, taunted, is insufferable. In the

wild haunts of the mountain glens, with the rude companions of my desperate fortunes, I shall find hereafter refuge."

"The tender, lovely Isabel," he added, sighing heavily, (as he dashed with his hand a tear from his eye, which he felt ashamed should appear there) "deserved a happier fate. But no reproach escaped her gentle, uncomplaining lips. She pined, and died, in solitude; whilst I am left, too late, to mourn the loss of that fair flower, which drooped and withered beneath so rude a shelter."

Sir Humphrey, agitated by painful recollections, and vexed with the little feeling and delicacy of his present lady, upon whose angry brow he saw the gathering storm; without one kind adieu, abruptly tore himself from her for ever.

Elizabeth knew her husband to be a man of determined resolution; and she learnt, of late, of desperate fortunes; but she little imagined that he meant, on the instant, to put his threat to leave her in

immediate execution: and when, with hasty steps, indignant air, without one kind word at parting, he abruptly left the room, she, for some time, stood motionless with dismay and astonishment.

Sir Humphrey, mounting a favourite hunter*, which had of late been the faithful companion of his extraordinary exploits, he passed through the gates of that ancient fortress, which, once closed, never more were opened to receive him.

Here he paused in gloomy meditation, surveying, for the last time, that castle, within whose walls so many convivial scenes had passed; where he, and his wild companions, had oft times feasted in extravagance and boundless profusion; whither he had brought the gentle, un-

* With misanthropic feelings he mounted a favourite hunter, which he had yet preserved from the wreck of his property, and left the town of his nativity; resolving to levy contributions on that society, which had scouted him from the circles in which he had been accustomed to move, as an unworthy member. — *Life of Sir Humphrey Kynaston.*

pretending Isabel, a blooming, tender bride. Now, how changed the scene! How melancholy each future prospect! Despised — reproached by the haughty, violent woman, that was now his wife — shunned by society — outlawed — banished — whither could he direct his steps? — into what corner of the world find peace and refuge? Happiness was fled for ever; for by his family, his friends, his wife, he was no more regarded.

As he slowly paced along, oft he stopt, and cast a lingering look behind. He stroked his faithful horse; and, as he chased the starting tear away, exclaimed, “With thee now, for my sole guide, companion, faithful friend, I renounce the world; and in some drear and lone spot will take up my future dwelling. There live, there die, unseen, and unlamented!”

* * * * *

Depressed and mortified by the vexations and disappointments which he now experienced, in the cold neglect and refusal of all countenance and aid from his family and friends *, Sir Humphrey, in a fit of deep despondence, gave loose to all those vices, into which he at first was led, more from a spirit of enterprise and frolic than depravity of heart.

The sordid selfishness of his wife's character had filled him with disgust and contemptuous indignation. His own disposition was naturally liberal ; nay, even humane and benevolent. He abhorred every mean passion ; and shortly after his marriage with Elizabeth Meredith

* He appealed for assistance to his friends ; they refused him. Some with affected condolence for his misfortunes, and others with taunts for his extravagance, and neglect of an affectionate wife. In this emergency Elizabeth returned to her relations ; and Sir Humphrey, giving loose to his impetuous and uncontrollable temper, entered upon a life of life, unsanctioned by the laws of his country. — *Life of Sir H. Kynaston.*

ap Howel, discovered it was not affection, but ambition, which had prompted her to accept his hand. In those moments of deep remorse which now seized him, he fondly recalled the image of that tender, graceful being, whom, notwithstanding all his wild irregularities, he had ever passionately loved.

Disgusted with mankind, even his gay associates were renounced. As he had said to the Lady Kynaston, in some wild recess he would find a future home, where no human step could trace him; live by plunder*, paying no regard to man, nor entertaining any fear of punishment; whilst he was in possession of his well-trained faithful horse, which he was assured would carry him safely through every peril; and he defied all difficulty and danger.

* Most of the adventures ascribed to him, whether probable or improbable, seem to have been more dictated by whim, than a desire of plunder.—*Beauties of England and Wales*.

His first object was to secure a retreat from

In Sir Humphrey's more prosperous and happy days, during some of his hunting excursions, he had remarked a romantic and sequestered spot, though contiguous to a straggling village, remote from man, called *Ness Cliff*, a high impending rock, bold, rude, and broken, but wooded at the top with oak, birch, Scotch firs, and richly tufted with the purple heather, the glowing broom and other spontaneous plants. In the bosom of this steep and broken rock, Sir Humphrey resolved to fix his wild and lonely habitation.*

open pursuit, and from prying curiosity, and this he found in the *Ness Cliff* mountain. He dug a hole in the rock, which was inaccessible to more than one at a time, and which proved to him a perfect safety for his person; as to his horse, so well trained was that faithful animal, that though a whistle from his master was instantaneously obeyed, he could baffle the ingenuity of one hundred individuals to take him by force. This cavern is considered, at the present day, a great curiosity, and every child can direct the curious traveller to Kynaston's cave.—*Life of Sir H. Kynaston.*

* The cave is approached by a very steep flight of steps (formerly much wider, but now cut away for

He ingeniously hewed a cavity, sufficient to admit himself and animal, and in the rude hollow of the rock, they lived, they ate, they slept together.

Often previous to his incursions, he mounted the high rock to take a survey of the country, overlooking thence the Welsh border to a vast extent, presenting in front the prominent Breidden mountains, with the Severn and Vyrnew rivers, gleaming in the sun-beams at their feet. The Berwyns (which Pennant styles the British Alps), Oswestry, Seylattin mountain, Chirk castle, and the range of Clwydian hills, as far as Bryn Yorhin, bordering on Chester, formed a panoramic view, at once grand and beautiful.

quarry stones). The pillar of division between the room now inhabited, and the recess containing two beds in the upper and lower story, bears date of 1564, though the period of Humphrey's exploits was somewhat earlier. It was supposed he dealt with the devil, and that his horse *was* the devil. It would come at his whistle, kneel for him to mount, and do a variety of tricks.—*Dovaston's Sketches.*

A sort of forest rose above the back of the cave, with a keeper's house situated in the deepest part ; and a little beyond, lay the village of Hopton, with the fine expanse of Valeswood, abounding with noble oaks ; contiguous in Startlewood, an ancient Grange farm, and Puck, or *Pouck* lane, in olden times, and even now, celebrated as the resort of fairies, ghosts, witches, and all the tribes of supernatural beings, who are believed to there hold their nightly revels.

With them Sir Humphrey was supposed to hold perpetual intercourse, and that they afforded their aid in directing and favouring with their spells his pursuits.

Deprived of the government of Middlecastle*, after some most flagrant depreda-

* The enormous debts he contracted by his imprudent life and conduct, caused him to be declared an outlaw, and he sheltered himself in a cave, in the west part of *Ness Cliff* rock, called to this day *Kynaston's cave*, which he enlarged. — *Dovaston's Sketches*.

tions, which no law, however mild, could sanction, Sir Humphrey was outlawed by his country, and that retreat, which in despondence and disgust he had selected, now became his chosen haunt of concealment from that justice, which he braved, and threatened to overtake him.

The native benevolence of his heart, the frankness and generosity of his disposition, made him adored by the poor, although he became the terror of the rich*, and the farmers plentifully supplied him and his faithful horse with food and raiment; for though they feared him, yet they held him in respect.

Sir Humphrey Kynaston was no common plunderer, for what he took was not

* In all his depredatory adventures, he seems to have regarded one act of justice; for what he took from the rich, he gave freely to the poor, by whom he was as much beloved as he was dreaded by the wealthy. On the road if he saw a cart with one horse, and another with three, he made them equal, by taking the fore horse from the latter, and hooking it to the former.—*Beauties of England and Wales*.

from actual necessity, but at times from a love of frolic and whimsical exploit; in which, even in more prosperous days, he delighted, but now with unlicensed freedom pursued.

A few years rolled over Sir Humphrey Kynaston's head without his being apprehended; and though he was constantly informed that considerable rewards were offered for his person; he had a host of friends in the numerous poor of the neighbourhood, to whom he bountifully distributed the profits of his weekly depredations during the foregoing week. Their unbounded gratitude and affection was a security for his person, for none of them would betray or apprehend him.

Contiguous to the cave, there lived a facetious, good-natured blacksmith, who displayed his ingenuity, in always so differently shoeing his faithful horse, as by that device to render it impossible to trace his hoofs. But even this means

would have proved fruitless, for so uncommonly fleet was he in his course, so sagacious, so dextrous, that he bid defiance to all pursuit; no mountain was too steep to climb, no thicket too deep to penetrate, no river too rapid to ford.

Sir Humphrey had long taken leave of the world, and all his gay associates*. Wild, unparalleled as were his actions, he yet had not become so hardened in vice, nor so callous to all sense of unkindness, as not to sensibly feel the cruelty of his late father's intimate friend Guillim Lloyd†, the most active of his enemies, who offered large sums to have him brought to justice. The gallant spirit of Sir Humphrey was roused not merely to indignation, when the intelligence reached him, but a bitter

* Of Kynaston's comrades, even tradition is silent.—*Dovaston*.

† Mr. Lloyd, of Aston, who had been an intimate friend of his father's, offered large rewards for his apprehension.—*Life of Kynaston*.

feeling of mortified pride and sorrow was awakened in his bosom, and he determined no longer to conceal himself, but boldly to confront him.

Early in the morning, he mounted his ever-ready horse *, and set out for Aston, the mansion of Guillim Lloyd, situated between Ness Cliff and Oswestry, which he reached about noon. He dismounted; and as he was ushered into the ancient hall, he said to the old domestic with proud dignity, "Inform Guillim Lloyd that Sir Humphrey Kynaston would speak with him."

The man, who had eyed Sir Humphrey with a curious but timid look, quickly retreated on hearing his name to a distance; but after surveying him for a few minutes, cautiously advanced, and assuming a degree of courage he did not feel, said in a tremulous voice, "And what may ye want with my master, Guillim Lloyd? To rob, to plunder him.

* Tradition is also silent respecting the name of Kynaston's horse.

Na, na, Sir Humphrey, it will not do — your deeds are too notorious to gain you admittance here. Troop off again — fly, as ye are wont, over mountain and brake with the *devil* * that carries you, for the devil, sure enough, it must be, which the evil spirits you deal with have provided ; so ye come not here to harm my poor old master.”

“ Know you not, Sir Humphrey,” continued Cludd, by degrees acquiring more courage, “ large bounty is offered by Guillim Lloyd for your apprehension? I am, therefore, much surprised at your boldness in coming to Aston Hall, whatever may be your business ; and I would

* It was supposed. he dealt with the devil, and that his horse (no doubt a gentle, docile creature) was the devil.—*Dovaston.*

“ He called spirits from Hell, as the old folks tell ;
And they say that he dealt with the devil.”

Old Ballad.

“ The horse that he rode was a spirit they say.”

Old Ballad.

advise you, Sir Humphrey, to depart before the law wont let ye."

"Man," interrupted Sir Humphrey, stamping his foot with stern command, having impatiently listened thus long to old Cludd, "I will see Guillim Lloyd, *my father's friend*:" he added, with a sarcastic smile, "Tell him, from Sir Humphrey Kynaston, that he will not quit Aston Hall until he has spoken a few words in his private ear." He drew his baselard* from his belt, upon which poor Cludd again hastily retreated.

"I am," exclaimed Sir Humphrey, in a menacing tone, "a man of desperate fortune, but of firm resolve. Dare to disobey me, loon, and it may fare ill with thee."

"Go," he continued, "to Guillim Lloyd on this instant, and say, that I would fain see him."

Cludd departed; but at every step

* A dagger, or wooden knife.

turned back his head, to take a view of Sir Humphrey.

When Cludd informed his master that Sir Humphrey Kynaston was now standing in his hall, and would not depart without seeing him, he was extremely distressed and alarmed ; for he imagined nothing less, than that in the spirit of revenge, he came to take his life, for the measures he had used to have him apprehended.

Finding it impossible to decline an interview, he endeavoured to assume composure ; and with a smiling courteous aspect, he descended to the hall, which Sir Humphrey was pacing with long and hasty strides.

Guillim Lloyd tried to speak, and bid him welcome ; but the attempt was vain, and his voice faltered.

Sir Humphrey, observing his embarrassment exclaimed, with a reproachful and contemptuous smile, “ You were my father’s friend, and you would prove his

son's, if report speaks truth. I, therefore, come to boldly tell ye, Guillim Lloyd, that while I defy your threatened vengeance on my head, I would warn ye from all attempt in future, to put that threat in execution."

"If I do harm ye," continued Sir Humphrey, in a determined voice, "rob ye, it is to distribute to those who need it—to divide the gifts of fortune more equally."

"NessCliff cave is my house, my home. Its cold stones my bed, my pillow. I want, I ask no other. The food that is bestowed upon me, I return in part again to those who need it; and the noble animal, whose swift foot speeds me from every threatened danger, and conducts me safely to my lonely den, is my faithful friend, my solace, my companion."

"The treachery of mankind proved my destruction. Flattering friends, in the prosperous hours of life, ever turn deceivers. You too, Guillim Lloyd," he

proceeded, with a look of scornful indignation, "could fawn and flatter Sir Roger Kynaston; but his son has naught to give, and though you want naught from him, the tribute which you pay of friendship to his father's memory, is to offer a large reward to apprehend his son."

"I now stand before you, Guillim Lloyd," exclaimed Sir Humphrey, as with a fierce and bold defiance he confronted him, and his eyes flashed fire. — "Take my life—but let it not be basely. I challenge you to combat. If I die, it must be honourably, as becomes the son of such a sire. Let it not be said, that Sir Humphrey Kynaston suffered death from the apprehension of his father's friend."

The noble and spirited address of Sir Humphrey subdued Guillim Lloyd.

"You are free to depart, Sir Humphrey," he said, "and in peace; you shall not be molested. You have a brave spirit, and none from me shall harm you."

Before you go, I must pledge you in a tankard of our native ale."

"Willingly," he replied, "and let it be a pledge of peace between us."

Cludd bore the silver tankard to his master, eyeing Sir Humphrey with suspicion and astonishment.

"Pledge me, Guillim,"* cried Sir Humphrey.

He did so—took a gentle draught, and then, with a cordial smile, handed the tankard to Sir Humphrey. Having drank to the health of his host, he finished the remainder of the liquor, and then, with surprising composure and deliberation, put the silver tankard beneath his cloak, and wishing Guillim Lloyd a good day, sprang on his horse, which was waiting at

*"Pledge me, Mr. Lloyd," cried Kynaston. Mr. Lloyd complied; after which Kynaston finished the remainder of the ale, to the good health of his host; and putting the silver tankard in his pocket, very cavalierly departed, wishing Mr. Lloyd a good day.
—*Life of Kynaston.*

the portal, and was out of sight and reach in a few seconds.

“ I told you, master,” said Cludd, lifting up his hands and eyes with amazement, “ that this Sir Humphrey Kynaston, as he is called, this free-booter, this robber, dealt with the evil one, and that his horse was no other than the devil. They for certain hold conversations together, and after putting all these unlawful actions into his head, he then spirits him away, for they seemed to fly through the very air, as I have seen the witches many a night in Puck Lane, whizzing as they rode through the air.”

“ The devil indeed ! ” replied Guillim Lloyd, with impatient vexation, “ the vile thief, to rob me of my silver tankard ; a tankard that has been a bit of family plate, for I don’t know how many generations. To carry it off so deliberately. But if I rouse the whole country, he shall not escape ; I will way-lay him as he comes out of his savage den, and he shall be

brought to punishment. The neighbourhood is not safe whilst this desperado lives."

"To Sir Humphrey the silver tankard was valueless. He did not take it from a love of plunder, but from a love of frolic, when the spirit seized him; but, at a favorable opportunity, he intended, through some indirect channel, to return the tankard to the old man. He had remarked that it was a valuable family appendage, richly emblazoned with the arms and devices: but as some revenge was due for Guillim Lloyd's evil intentions towards him, he had purloined the cup.

Guillim in return was so much exasperated at the trick which Sir Humphrey Kynaston had played him, that he immediately entered into an association with some of his neighbours to surprise him. Being an outlaw, the sheriff of Salop had authority to take him.

For this purpose, having intimation

that Sir Humphrey Kynaston usually passed over Montford-bridge to go to Shrewsbury; the sheriff caused one of the arches of the bridge (then formed of planks laid upon the stone pillars) to be taken up, and placed a number of men in ambush to surprise him.

Sir Humphrey, mounted on his noble horse, entered the bridge, and was astonished by the ambuscade behind. He perceived the peril by which he was surrounded—not an instant was to be lost in a desperate effort to escape. He put spurs into his faithful animal, and springing over the breach, or, as some say, leaped into the Severn, bore him in proud triumph beyond the reach of his enemies, and conveyed him safe to Ness Cliff.*

* This leap is said to have been forty feet, was since measured in Dovaston Common; and by the will of Mr. Kynaston, of Ruyton, six pounds a-year was left for ever to keep open a large H and K, which were cut in the turf at the extremities of the leap. This leap, (so marked), existed in the memories of many

A wealthy farmer, who, with gaping wonder, had witnessed the astonishing leap of the horse, called out to Sir Humphrey, who seemed to ride on the wings of the wind, "I will give you ten cows and a bull for that devil of a horse."

"Ten cows and a bull," he coldly replied, "could not do that."

The farmer smiled, and Sir Humphrey pursued his flight amidst a hundred bystanders, who gazed at him as something superhuman.

The miraculous escape of Sir Humphrey Kynaston, owing to the extraordinary sagacity and dexterity of his horse, filled all his spectators with such amazement they became assured the animal was nothing human, and that the machinations of the devil could alone have pre-

persons now living, and the gate near it is still called Horse-leap-gate, and the lane, Horse-leap-lane. But the common was inclosed ten years ago, and the leap ploughed up. It is however still talked of by the inhabitants of the villages of Dovaston, Kinnerley, and Huoching. — *Dovaston's Sketches.*

cipitated his rider the depth of forty feet unhurt.

The sheriff had found himself so completely defeated in his ingenuous plan to entrap Kynaston, he now gave up all further attempt, as perfectly hopeless; and came into the same opinion with the common people, that he was aided in all his daring exploits by some supernatural agent, which defied all human means to bring him to justice.

Sir Humphrey Kynaston, in the mean time, elate with the success of his late enterprise, after resting himself and horse for a short time in his new habitation, again issued forth, ripe for new depredations and new adventures.

Without remorse, he robbed the steward of a wealthy Shropshire man to the amount of several hundred pounds; a sum which he immediately distributed with his usual profuse liberality, to his needy friends in the vicinity of Ness Cliff.

Soon after this plunder, he received,

through the medium of one of his poor neighbours, a letter from the owner of the property which he had taken, stating his extreme distress in the loss of so considerable a sum ; adding, that it would, of necessity, reluctantly compel him to immediately call in all the arrears due from his tenants, and enforce payment ; a circumstance that would stigmatize him as a hard and cruel landlord, from such an unlooked for oppression, having always been kind and lenient towards his tenantry.

It had uniformly been the singular whim and humour of Sir Humphrey, in all his depredatory acts, to befriend the poor at the expense of the rich. His disposition was humane, generous, and governed by some sense of equity. He was touched by the candid statement in the letter just received ; and immediately signified, in his reply, that if the owner of the sum which he had taken would send him a list of his distressed tenants,

the injury which he had sustained should be repaired.*

The request was complied with, and a list of the tenantry sent to Sir Humphrey Kynaston. He lost no time in making every necessary enquiry into their state ; which he found not only such as represented, needy and industrious, but also that Rowland Mawley appeared a most benevolent and considerate landlord.

This conviction determined Sir Humphrey to make full restitution of the sum which he had taken, as soon as his next prize would so enable him.

His chosen victim for the purpose was Meredith ap Howel ap Morice, the father of Elizabeth, his present wife. He had always shown himself an unfeeling, rigid landlord, heavily oppressing his poor tenants, and enforcing his steward to show no mercy to those in arrears.

Kynaston considered such a man a

* A fact.

fair object for plunder. Rolling in wealth, none of which he distributed to those who needed, and levying oppression where there was but slender means to pay, was a species of cruelty, that, amidst all his wild depredations, he had never practised; and, he thought, merited its due punishment. Kynaston, therefore, without remorse, stripped his steward of every guinea which he had taken much pains and trouble to collect, and triumphantly made off with his rich booty.

He wrote to Rowland Mawley, desiring he would meet him on the following day, in the small wood adjoining to Old Oswestry, and to come privately, as what he had to communicate was intended for his ear alone.

After the depredations committed by Sir Humphrey Kynaston on his property, Rowland Mawley did not feel very prompt in granting his request. However, after some consideration, he at length ac-

ceded ; having heard that this extraordinary man, this free - booter, this outlaw, was not vicious, but still maintained the character of possessing a noble, generous, and humane spirit.

Both were punctual to the appointment. Sir Humphrey was on foot, and was standing in an attitude of anxious impatience, with his face directed towards the path by which Rowland Mawley was to enter. As he approached, Sir Humphrey beheld a man of a most benignant aspect, with a manner mild and courteous. Sir Humphrey's salutation was familiar, but dignified. "You meet me here," he said, "by my request ; and I thank you for the gracious compliance, for I am free to own that I have injured you."

"I wish and mean," he continued "to make restitution for that injury. Take, then, Rowland Mawley," (presenting a heavy purse) "that sum of which you were despoiled. I am not a needy

desperado; what I boldly take, I take not from sordid selfishness, nor even to bestow on those late wild associates, who so unwittingly I feasted on my bounty. I take but to give to those, who sparingly possess a share of this world's bounty."

"You are a man of worth," proceeded Sir Humphrey, "I venerate the character; and pray, most fervently, that Rowland Mawley may ever have the means to distribute with his liberal heart and hand, that plenty, which, while others want, he has the inclination so largely to bestow."

The old man fixed his eyes with an expression of surprise and admiration, on Sir Humphrey Kynaston, as he cordially extended his hand. At length, after some pause, he said, earnestly regarding him, "Can this be Sir Humphrey Kynaston, whose wild exploits, and unlicensed depredations, all Shropshire dread? Who, flying over mountain, glen, river, is become the terror of the rich;

but the cherished friend and benefactor of the poor and needy?"

"It is even so," replied Sir Humphrey, with a good-humoured smile; "I am, in truth, that base despoiler; who the rich man fears, but the poor befriend and love."

"You are worthy, Sir Humphrey Kynaston," interrupted Rowland Mawley, warmly, "of a better calling. Be advised, and quit those disgraceful habits. Go to your home, your wife, your friends; even now it will not prove too late; they will countenance, and repair your broken fortunes. I will represent you to them an altered and repentant man! Be persuaded," he added, with earnest solicitation, "for you have shown yourself brave, generous, equitable."

"Good Rowland," replied he, "I thank you for your kind purpose; but it cannot be; nought can now avail. Know, that Sir Humphrey Kynaston is far too proud, to meanly stoop to beg to

those for his subsistence, who once refused that bounty and support, which, at the period he requested it, was withheld*.”

“No!” he exclaimed, with mournful indignation, “I spurn all aid, all application. An outcast from society I am made, and an outcast I will remain till death.”

“But I feel,” he added, relaxing with gentleness, “your proffered kindness, my worthy friend. I duly estimate that kindness, which, to accept, would debase the gallant spirit of Sir Humphrey Kynaston.”

“For my present wife, she is not worthy to bear my father’s noble name; which, although I have, it must be owned, somewhat disgraced, yet will live in after generations with some renown.”

* His friends offered, latterly, to provide for him, if he would quit the life he had hitherto led; but he refused every offer of the kind; telling them, they should have done so before he became what he then was. — *Life of Kynaston.*

“Did the beauteous Isabel still exist,” he continued, melting into tenderness at the fond recollection of her sweet forbearance; “then, indeed, to her endearing arms I might have soon returned, a repentant sinner. There have reposed, by her have been forgiven for that cold neglect, she so ill deserved; and, with her pitying sigh, have been translated from this busy world, lamented and respected.”

Rowland Mawley, finding that all his entreaty proved unavailing, reluctantly took leave of the spirited and ingenuous Kynaston, and proceeded on his way homewards; whilst Sir Humphrey, sensibly touched with his friendship, almost lamented the impossibility of reclaiming his life, so many existing circumstances arose to prevent it; and he returned to Ness Cliff only to renew, on the following day, those habits, which, though his conscience told him was wrong, he had not the resolution to abandon.

One other means was attempted by the magistrates of the county, for Kynaston's apprehension, and which they believed must prove effectual. They assembled all the constables belonging to Shrewsbury and the adjacent towns, and dispersing on the top of Ness Cliff rock, awaited Sir Humphrey's arrival amongst the poor, who there assembled every Monday, to share his weekly bounty, which he distributed amongst them*. When they beheld the crowd of people collected, to partake of Kynaston's benevolence, they were dismayed by the formidable appearance of such a number of his friends and followers, and prudently dispersed; for, to rashly encounter such a phalanx, was only endangering their own lives, without attaining their object†.

* A fact.

† Sir Humphrey Kynaston was never taken; but died, as tradition says, in his cave. — *Dovaston's Sketches*.

* * * *

It was not in acts of bounty alone that Sir Humphrey's benevolence was displayed towards the oppressed. His humanity was extended in visiting the sick, to whose necessities he kindly administered. During one of those visits to a dying woman, his horse was purloined, and rode off with. Kynaston directed his steps towards Ness Cliff, and with a shrill whistle*, the usual and well-known signal, was speedily answered; and he beheld the faithful creature swiftly bounding towards him, having thrown his unknown rider, and crossed the country to the cave.

* * * *

It now became Sir Humphrey's turn

* His horse would come at his whistle, kneel for him to mount, and do other tricks, easily taught to horses.—*Dovaston's Sketches.*

to require that relief, which so often he had bestowed on his poor neighbours. His constitution was much impaired by the late rude habits of his life. His spirits lost their usual boyancy; a slow wasting fever gradually was consuming that frame which once seemed formed to endure every hardship, and to resist the heaviest misfortunes. He became weary, and dissatisfied, with a life spent in plunder. His heart sickened for some object to beguile his dreary solitude; and, as his horse gazed on him with dumb affection, and gently licked the hand held out to stroke him, he often retired to a corner of the cave to indulge in those painful recollections which bore so heavily upon his mind.

Sir Humphrey was adulated by his humble faithful followers, and they daily pressed in multitudes to visit him at Ness Cliff; for he no longer went abroad, but gave himself up to deep remorse and despondency.

The poor became deeply afflicted, when they witnessed Sir Humphrey's melancholy state: they dreaded the loss of their generous benefactor; and earnestly petitioned that he would be prevailed upon to see an old woman, noted for her skill, and whose medicine had not only the reputation of effecting the most miraculous cures, but by her witchcraft, also, she preserved her neighbours, and their cattle, from harm.

"My good friends," he replied, "I cannot be troubled; I only wish to die in peace. My illness is beyond all aid; no human skill can reach it; for it is seated here," putting his hand upon his heart.

"It cannot harm you," said Winefred, "to just see poor old Mabel. There is nothing fearful in her look, for she is a hale, cleanly woman; she has given her mind so to the study of the sick, mixing all sorts of healing potions with the wild herbs which grow upon our mountains,

curing, in a surprising way, those she takes in hand, I am sure she will do you good."

"Mabel," she continued, "has the reputation of being a witch*; and, for certain, so she is; for there is neither man, woman, child, nor beast, that she does not perform some miraculous cure upon."

"Where does this wonderful old woman-witch, or whatever name she goes by, live?" asked Kynaston.

"Not a far way," replied Winefred, "from Ness Cliff; she dwells in a sort of a house over Woolston well†, and even that she has bewitched, for the healing of various diseases."

* He agreed, at the earnest request of the poor inhabitants, to receive the advice of an old woman who dealt in herbs, and passed for a witch in the neighbourhood of Westfelton, where she lived, and administered medicine to the sick in the cottages around her. — *Life of Kynaston*.

† Woolston well, celebrated to this day for its miraculous cure of various diseases, particularly sore eyes. — *Dovaston's Sketches*.

"For your satisfaction," said Sir Humphrey, with a faint voice, "my poor friends, I will yield to your desire. Bring the woman hither. But it must be quickly, I have not long to live; and a holy friar, to whom I would fain confess, would better ease my troubled conscience than a visit from this weird woman."

"She will cure you," exclaimed Winefred, elated; "her skill is wonderful; and we shall not lose our benefactor."

Sir Humphrey smiled on her with incredulity. But Winefred having gained his consent to fetch Mabel, mounted his faithful horse, and soon reached West-felton.

A few hours brought Mabel to Kynaston's cave. She ascended the rough stone steps, hewn out of the rock, and was ushered by Winefred into Sir Humphrey's rude apartment.

He was stretched upon a straw pallet, which was spread within a wild rocky recess, forming part of the cave, and in

the lower compartment reposed his faithful horse*. His figure was wrapt in a scarlet cloak, and his long dark hair partially fell over his brow and cheek. His face was wan, his cheek hollow ; but his full black eyes still retained a spark of their native fire, although their naturally brilliant and playful expression was now quenched by sorrow.

Mabel, with soft steps approached the pallet, but Kynaston neither spoke nor moved. She stood in silence ; and, with tender caution, gazed on the invalid.

Sir Humphrey sighed heavily, as he turned to look upon the woman.

She wore a long cloak, the hood of which was so closely drawn over her face, the features were only indistinctly seen ; but the tall and slender form that bent over him was no vulgar figure.

Sir Humphrey, surprised at the ap-

* The part of the cave, now containing the old woman's bed, was the stable of the freebooter's horse. — *Dovaston's Sketches.*

pearance of the woman, half-roused himself, that he might more minutely survey her. Though she seemed to have studied to conceal both her face and her figure from the curious eye of observation, he remarked, that from a degree of motion in the drapery of her cloak as it was closely drawn round her, her frame was evidently agitated; a tear also escaped from her down-cast eyes of jet, marked by an expression of compassion, which, in the character of such a person, he could not possibly define. The deep saffron of her skin, formed a strange and striking contrast to her clear and brilliant eye; but, over that saffron hue, there passed a deep and crimson colour, which gave a transient lustre to every feature; and as that colour passed away, an ashy paleness spread over her face, that became frightful.

“Why don’t you speak, Mabel, to Sir Humphrey?” cried Winefred, with impatience, looking at her with wonder.

“Don’t ye hurry her, Winefred,” interrupted another bye-stander, “she is watching his disorder, that she may know the better what to give him.”

“Is he past cure?” said a third.

Mabel turned away, and an unbidden sigh escaped her bosom, but still she spoke not.

“Mabel — woman,” cried Winefred, in a tone of vexation, “what makes ye stand there like a statue — have ye lost the use of your tongue?”

“Woman,” cried Sir Humphrey, with a look that seemed to penetrate to the heart of Mabel, “I perceive you think that I am dying. In a common mind such pity as you show is most unusual. Whence come ye — who are ye — that with such a show of gentle kindness you seem to view a dying outcast?”

Still she spoke not, but she took his hand; and as he felt the tender pressure, he exclaimed, — “’Tis thus, that in this closing scene of life the poor forsaken

Isabel, had she been spared to bless me with her sight, might have soothed a wretched, but repentant man."

"Yet no!" he despondingly continued, "her pure and virtuous mind disclaimed alliance with so dissolute a being, where there could be no kindred sympathies. But yet, I fondly loved her; how fondly she did not know nor guess; could her benign spirit look upon her disconsolate and unhappy husband, methinks the melting kindness of her heart would whisper peace and pardon! I venerated that excellence, which, though it awed me, I respected."

"To the repentant," murmured Mabel, in a low faltering voice, "pardon and peace are promised."

"Sayest thou so," exclaimed Kynaston, starting up, and wildly gazing upon her, for there was something in the tone of her voice that thrilled to his very soul.

"If thy wife," proceeded Mabel, "was perfect as thou describest her, ten-

der, gentle, affectionate—if she loved thee——”

“If she loved me,” interrupted Kynaston, with eager impatience, “Aye, most tenderly!”

“And you left her,” added Mabel in a low solemn voice.

“True, I left her—yet I meant it not for long. — In the meanwhile, the lovely gentle Isabel fled from Middle-castle, nor has she been seen nor heard of since that fatal period—shocked—disgusted, I question not, with the vices of the man she called her husband, she tore herself away.”

“If you loved her as you say,” added Mabel, in a broken accent, “sure it was strange that you so soon should wed another.”

“Name not that marriage,” cried Sir Humphrey, with frantic gesture. “It was an outrage to her memory, that brought along with it a due punishment. That Isabel died, I am convinced, for her heart was broken.”

“Yet,” proceeded Mabel, “many linger through a miserable existence with a broken heart. It is even now reported that Isabel died not.”

“Is she not dead?” cried Sir Humphrey, almost springing from his pallet, and steadfastly regarding her.

“Woman—witch—wizard—whatever thing they call ye—speak—tell me what you know of Isabel, my wife—the cherished idol of my heart. If your incantations have power to bring her thither, oh! let me see her—fold her to these repentant arms, and supplicate her forgiveness.”

“Do you,” said Mabel, with increased solemnity, “really wish to see the poor deserted one—and are those vows sincere of love and constancy?—or, is it that, standing on the confines of the grave, conscience awakens a feeling, which now disturbs your latter moments?”

“Oh! wherefore thus torture me?” he exclaimed with agony. “If you speak

truth, that Isabel still lives, powerless as I am to travel, yet will I be conveyed to where she dwells, that I may be forgiven, ere I close mine eyes — once more behold that face——”

“Behold it now!” exclaimed the disguised Isabel, as with trembling hand she threw off her hood, and falling on her knees beside her husband’s pallet, was enfolded in his arms.

“Oh! beloved and chosen husband of my heart!” cried the Lady Kynaston, tears streaming from her eyes, “as I forgive you, so I hope to be forgiven for this painful trial of your love and constancy. Restored to you, and your affection, the bitter pangs of separation are passed away in this blissful meeting.”

“Oh! my poor Isabel!” said he mournfully, as he pressed her to his heart, “’tis but a fleeting happiness — a momentary bliss to both!”

“But,” he added, as his eye glistened

with delight, "I die happy and repentant* ; I, once more look upon that beautiful face, whose radiant features no disguise can spoil, nor ought destroy the melody of that sweet voice, whose soothing melts my heart to tears as I fondly listen to you."

"Tell me, love," he proceeded, "where you have been so long — where lived — where hid yourself?"

"Soon after your departure from Middle-castle, I was summoned by a holy friar to my mother's death-bed. Ere I became your wife, my days were spent in simple useful occupations. When left desolate and forsaken, I sought retirement and disguise. Being, in my childhood, taught the use of herbs in various distillations, for the sick and poor ; I

* Wild Humphrey then, with faltering word,

"For myself I repent to Heaven ;

But if in life yet breathes my wife

I would be by her forgiven."

Dorvaston.

employed my time in administering to those who needed; hence I obtained the reputation of a witch, and by all the folks around West Felton, I have long been sought and known as such.”*

“When fetched to visit you, O! how my heavy throbbing heart fluttered with joy, that we should meet again!”

“Dearest Isabel!” said Kynaston, with feeble accents, “we meet ’tis true, but oh! how sad so soon to part again! I find the shades of death even now fast obscure thee from these eyes, that fain would look their last upon thee. Oh! my precious wife! let your prayers ascend to heaven along with mine, for my pardon and forgiveness!”

Isabel raised her hands, and her words

* She passed for a witch in the neighbourhood of West Felton. She retired to live at a house near Woolston well, celebrated even to this day for its miraculous cure of various diseases, particularly that of sore eyes.—*Doraston's Sketches.*

were those of humble fervent supplication. She turned her eyes upon her husband — the spirit was fled, and the Lady Kynaston fell prostrate on the lifeless body!

KYNASTON'S CAVE

Is high in the West Point of the rock at Nesscliff, and seen over the wood from the great road : it is much visited by passing strangers, to whom the following tale (containing most of the authentic particulars known of him) is told, and given for a small perquisite, by the old woman who inhabits it.

COME, sit ye down, fair gentlefolks,
Sit around my sunny cell ;
For fresh and gay is the summer's day,
And I'll of Wild Humphrey tell.

Oh have ye not heard of the Wild Humphrey,
Surnam'd of Kynaston ?
His father was dead, and he in his stead
As governor liv'd alone.

The castle of Middle, then high in pride,
Obey'd young Humphrey's law :
But his state-room now is a stall for the cow,
Where the cottager keeps his straw.

'Twas merry in the hall of the young Humphrey,
And the gay mirth sounded high ;
When home to his bed, young Humphrey led
Isabelle of Oswestry.

Now she was a maiden of low degree ;
 He in pow'r and parents great :
 Oh had they but thought on their diff'rent lot,
 Far better had been for their fate.

But William Côch, her father fond,
 Sought a match for his daughter high ;
 And it pleas'd him well when young Humphrey fell
 In love with her coal-black eye.

And, in sooth to tell, it might have been well,
 And bliss have bless'd their board,
 Had he but thought on his wife's poor lot,
 And hearken'd to Prudence' word.

But thoughtless and wild with his gay gallants,
 The Twelve good rules he broke ;
 So many a good house by a thoughtless spouse
 Is marr'd by modern folk. —

High breach of trust at length he made,
 And was by the king outlaw'd ;
 Then his wild career began to appear,
 And a bold freebooter he rode.

This cavern (then the poor quarriers' cell)
 He biggen'd and took for his own ;
 And those hooks then bore an iron door,
 In Severn's-town yet shewn.

His name and the date we see cut on the cave,
 Tho' time has the traces worn ;
 And the gentlefolks here say 'tis the same year
 When Nature's great Poet was born.

He call'd spirits from hell, as the old folks tell,
And they say that he dealt with the Devil :
If so learned he was, it were pity, alas,
To turn that blessing to evil.

The horse that he rode was a spirit they say,
That came at his whistle, and turn'd ;
But show horses I've seen that convince me, I ween
That his horse, and not he, was so learn'd.

To poor Isabelle he bade no farewell,
But bade her go home to her kin ;
Now a'nt it a shame that great gentlefolks,
That ought to know better, should sin ?

His whistle so whirl' arousd from the hill,
The daws in the cliffs that build :
Then 'twas up and away with the dawn of day,
To try what the road would yield.

Old Montford-bridge the sheriff took down,
And to take him in ambush lay ;
But the horse at a reach sprung over the breach,
And to Nesscliff safe bore him away.

The leap was since measur'd on Dovaston-heath,
And bequeath'd was a tester a year,
While the sun-beams shone, or the rain-drops run,
To keep the great letters clear.

The letters and leap were a spade-graff deep,
For 'twas tipp'd with an H and a K ;
And (unless I'm bely'd) it was forty-foot wide,
And the *Horse-leap* 'tis call'd to this day.

Then the Horse-leap butt, where the letters were cut,
With the heath-ling blossom was red :
But the sun and the rain now on Doyeston-plain,
Fill the wheat and the barley's head.

'Twould be breathless to tell of all that befell
Wild Humphrey so lawless and bold ;
Tho' much there is wrote, and more too, I wot,
By the marvelling villagers told.

As how from the rich he their purses took
To fill up the wants of the poor :
And how victuals and corn he found each morn
Left close at his cavern door.

How his horse up these steps, now half cut away,
From the fields at a whistle would come :
See there was his stall, with a bolt in the wall,
'Tis now my snug sleeping-room.

And I oft ask myself as to Heaven I pray,
When I in that chamber recline,
Tho' grandeur is great with its riches and state,
Is its bed so peaceful as mine ?

And I wonder to think on you fine gentlefolks,
(While over my Bible I'm bent)
Of the power possess'd to bless and be bless'd,
Ye are not with all content.

But, alack, I am rambling ; I'm foolish and old,
Or needs must have judg'd it uncommon,
That folks who such texts from the parson neglect,
Should attend to a preaching old woman.

Well, as I was a-telling, Wild Humphrey he led
This wayward life many a year ;
But he found he grew old, and time as it roll'd
To the end of his stage drew dear.

When life starting young is both healthy and strong,
Unbridled it gallops with haste ;
But when it no more likes the prospect before,
It turns to look back on the past.

So Humphrey the Wild look'd back on the past,
But all look'd foggy and foul ;
And as Death drew near, Hope labour'd with Fear
To glint on his gloomy soul.

All one as the clouds of a winter's eve
O'er yonder rocks are seen,
When dimly the gleam of a faint sun-beam
Endeavours to break between.

Now a woman did dwell at West Felton's fam'd well,
That in simples and herbs was skill'd ;
And well she knew for what purpose the dew
Their flowers and leafage fill'd.

And 'twas said, by her care but more by her pray'r
The sick and the simple they sped ;
And the old folks tell that now live at the well,
What a goodly life she led.

Now this good woman came to the Wild Humphrey,
But found when she came there,
To avert Death's hour was past her pow'r,
But he hop'd for her help in pray'r.

Oh! dim and dull was his dwindling eye,
When thus did the good dame say,
What most should I, thou poor Humphrey,
Unite with thee to pray?

Wild Humphrey then, with faltering word,
For myself I repent to Heaven;
But if in life yet breathes my wife
I would be by her forgiven.

Then, as he died, the lady cried,
At my last hour of life,
God pardon me as I do thee—
—Now, she was Humphrey's wife.

Then for his soul she knelt and pray'd,
To reach that happy shore
Where for ever blest the weary rest,
And the wicked sin no more.

So, fair gentlefolks, of the Wild Humphrey
I've told you in hobbling stave,
That I something may earn, and you something may
learn,
By visiting this his cave.

One ev'ning a youth, a friend to truth,
For me made this homely strain;
And should it procure but a mite for the poor,
He has not made it in vain.

* * * * *

Above a year had elapsed since Mr. Fortescue's visit into North Wales. During that period, Miss Griffiths had refused several high and apparently desirable alliances. She possessed the full power not only of the disposal of her fortune, but likewise of her hand. Numerous as were her suitors, she determined to bestow her hand alone on that man who, divested of sordid selfishness, had built his affection on the solid foundation of some experience of her character, and whose taste and sentiments, according with her own, was likely to ensure that felicity, which thousands taste not in the married state, from the total absence of that reciprocity of disposition and mind, so essential to exist between persons ordained to spend the remainder of their lives together.

Miss Griffiths had seen fine traits of feeling, goodness, and benevolence in the character of Mr. Fortescue. She

was not without penetration to have remarked, that from the hour of the village funeral, where with tender interest he had then regarded her, she had since imperceptibly grown on his affection. Her heart had been in his keeping ever since the rescue of Maudlin Hughes from a watery grave. The sympathies of their souls had united them ; for there is in pure and refined minds, a native sensibility, a delicacy that shrinks from offending, and is discoverable in the most trifling incidents of life, which the vulgar minded neither know, nor can they comprehend.

- " Where glows exalted sense and taste refin'd
- " There keener anguish rankles in the mind :
- " There feeling is diffus'd thro' ev'ry part,
- " Thrills in each nerve, and lives in all the heart ;
- " And those whose generous souls, each tear wou'd keep
- " For other's woes, are borne themselves to weep.
- " Sweet sensibility ! thou soothing power,
- " That shed'st thy blessings on the natal hour !
- " Like fairy favors ! art can never seize,
- " Nor affectation catch the power to please !

“ Sweet sensibility! thou keen delight,
“ Thou hasty, moral, sudden sense of right :
“ Thou untaught goodness ! virtues precious seed,
“ Thou sweet preserver of the generous deed ;
“ To those who know thee not, no power can paint,
“ And those who know thee, know all words are faint.

H. Burn's Poem on Sensibility.

It was that undefinable sensibility which displays itself not in words, but springs into action on every call for benevolence, which soothes the afflicted mourner, and mitigates the wants of the oppressed, that claimed alliance in the hearts of Miss Griffiths and Mr. Fortescue.

They were united. Their virtues descended to their posterity, and in the present times diffuse joy and gladness to the surrounding inhabitants of *Gwayn Castle*.

THE END.

LONDON:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

